

2dartist

Issue 093 | September 2013

34
pages of
tutorials
inside!

Learn to paint beastly battles

Piotr Foksowicz divulges his lighting techniques to help you achieve a large-scale dramatic battle scene



Vinod Rams
shares his sketchbook

Create unique vehicles

YongSub Noh takes us through the phases to create a fantasy vehicle from concept through to digital-painting

Design desert characters

Derek Stenning explores the factors that would affect and influence a character's evolution in the desert

plus

- 10 of the best digital artworks
- Vinod Rams' creature sketches
- Matte painting mythology
- + much more!

How to illustrate

femme fatales

Pyeongjun Park reveals industry tips and tricks used to create his anti-heroine character 'Morsus' in Photoshop!

Editor's Letter



JESS SERJENT-TIPPING
Deputy Editor

Welcome to the September 2013 issue of 2dartist magazine!


This month's issue is packed full of mythical scenes and quirky characters, including Pyeongjun Park's awesome femme-fatale that graces the cover. Inside you can discover the techniques Pyeongjun used to create this anti-heroine! If fantasy scenes are your thing, you won't want to miss Piotr Foksowicz's beastly battle scene tutorial or Rasmus Berggreen's project overview for his image *The Last Goodbye*.

We also catch up with Last Man Standing creator, Dan Luvisi, who talks pop culture icon, action figures, and gives us a sneak-peak at what he'll be talking about at this month's sunny Trojan Horse was a Unicorn festival!

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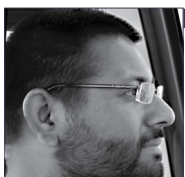
RYAN LANG

Ryan Lang is currently residing in Burbank, California, working for Walt Disney Animation Studios. When he's not drawing or painting, he's playing video games.... or drawing or painting.



PIOTR FOKSOWICZ

Digital Painter and concept artist Piotr Foksowicz has created many pieces for card games, book covers. He especially likes to create fantasy, post-apocalyptic and science-fiction images.



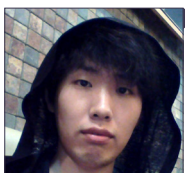
VINOD RAMS

Vinod is a senior concept artist at Motiga, a new independent video game company in the Seattle area. He is a specialist in character and creature design.



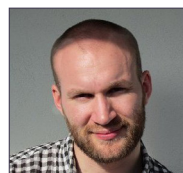
DEREK STENNING

Derek has been a production artist in the games industry for over a decade. He has handled visual-development on titles for Nintendo, Activision, and Marvel Entertainment, and is currently a senior concept artist at Microsoft.



PYEONGJUN PARK

Pyeongjun Park lives in Seoul, Korea and is currently in his 4th grade at university, as an animation student. Pyeongjun also works at VFX company Madman, and as a freelance illustrator for Applibot Inc.



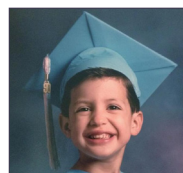
RASMUS BERGGREEN

Rasmus Berggreen currently works as a concept artist at games developer IO interactive, where he helps determine the visual look for the *Hitman* game. He also spends time realizing his own ideas, such as his book project *Fall of Gods*.



YONGSUB NOH

YongSub Noh is a self-taught, 3D animation artist from South Korea. He currently works for NCsoft and enjoys playing PC games, the drums and working on concept art in his spare time.



DAN LUVISI

Diligent Dan has worked for some of the biggest names in entertainment while pursuing his own personal projects, such as Last Man Standing and Popped Culture.

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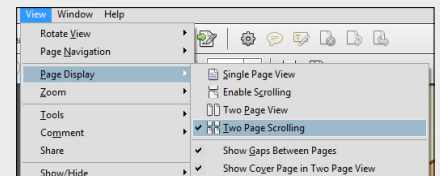
If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature within this magazine, then follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

Top tips for viewing

For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD**

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2dartist magazine, you can set the reader to display "two-up", which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
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Jump to articles

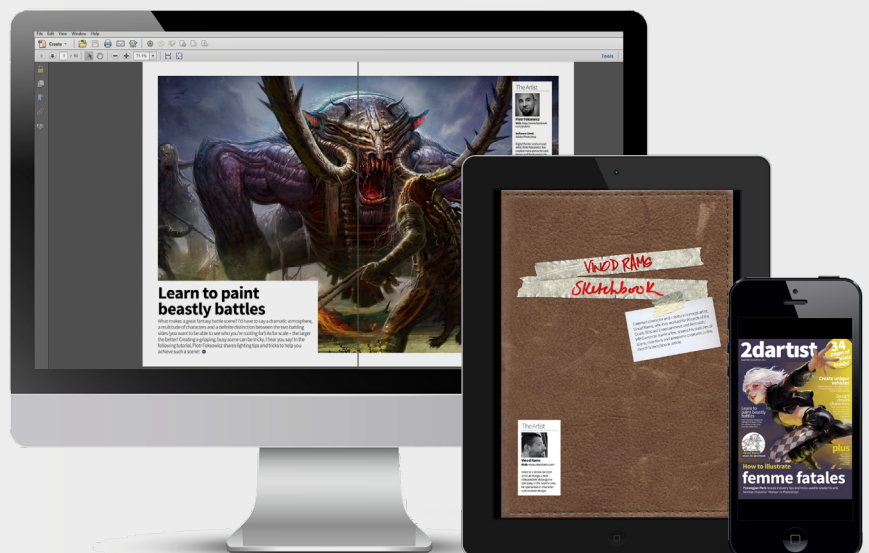
In the Contents pages, we have direct links to all articles within the magazine. If a certain article catches your eye, simply click (or tap on handheld devices) on the page number within the Contents, and you will be taken straight to that article.

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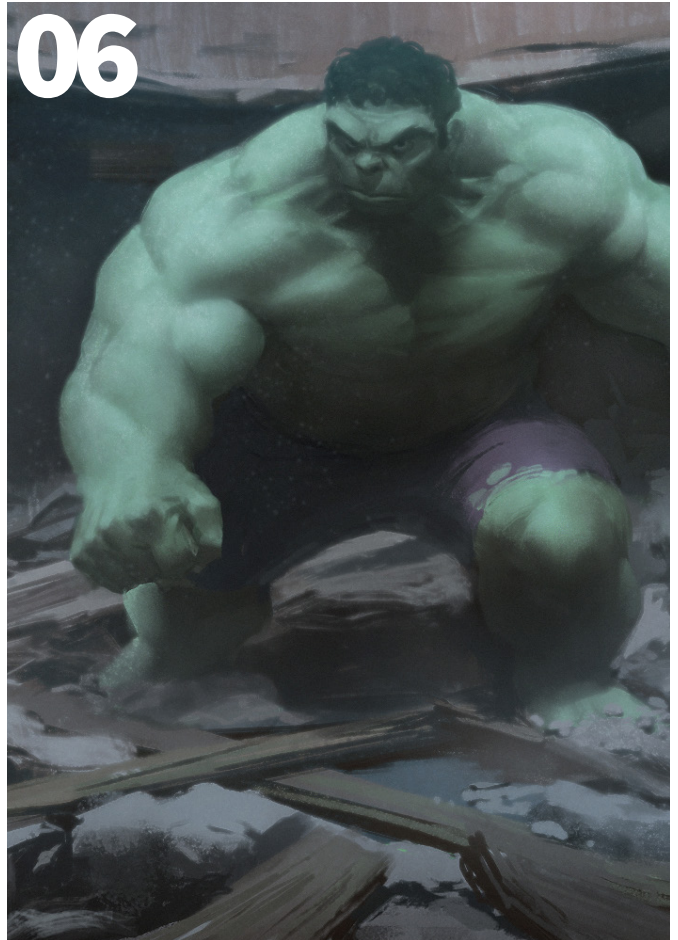
Rasmus Berggreen shares some handy matte painting tips which he used to create his image

100_ Digital art master: Ignacio Bazan

Ignacio Bazan Lazcano shares industry techniques that he used to create his image *Red Steam*.

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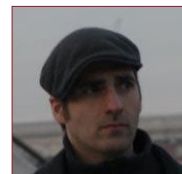




Ryan talks Wreck-It Ralph

Walt Disney animation visual development artist, Ryan Lang, who's concept art helped to realize the incredible world of *Wreck-It Ralph*, talks to 2dartist about his past practices and processes at one of the biggest animation studios in the world! ▶

The Artist



Ryan Lang

Web: <http://ryanlangdraws.blogspot.com>

Interviewed by:

Jess Serjent-Tipping

Ryan Lang is currently residing in Burbank, California, working for Walt Disney Animation Studios. When he's not drawing or painting, he's playing video games... or drawing or painting.



Fresh out of college, Ryan Lang let his portfolio do the talking and achieved what many aspiring artists only dream of, by getting accepted into the training program at Walt Disney Animation Studios. This then swiftly progressed into a full time role as a visual development artist.

Ryan couldn't believe it when he was thrown into his first project there and got to help bring the incredible world of *Wreck-It Ralph* to life!

We caught up with Ryan to talk favorite Disney characters, *Wreck-It Ralph* highs and lows, and what he gets up to when he's not making amazing concept art.

2dartist: Hi Ryan, thanks for taking the time to talk to 2dartist! For those who don't know you, how would you describe yourself and how you got into the industry?

Ryan Lang: I guess I would describe myself as a visual development generalist, who tends to focus on designing and painting environments. After I graduated from college, I was hired for the trainee program at Walt Disney Animation Studios, and was offered a full time position after I completed the program.

2DA: What was it about digital tools that made you want to work with them?

RL: The turnaround with digital work is very quick, and most companies now lean towards digital tools. That, and the whole 'undo' thing is pretty awesome.

2DA: Could you tell us a bit about your creative process and the software that you use?

RL: I mainly work in Photoshop. Sometimes I'll sketch out thumbnails or draw on paper, but eventually it ends up on the computer. I look at a lot of references as well, for detail and color inspiration. Once I have a good compositional thumbnail and a solid base of reference, I just start painting. ►



● Ryan recreates the incredible hulk

● A fantastic, almost-edible scene from Disney's *Wreck-It Ralph*, created by Ryan



Property of Walt Disney Animation Studios





● This is a demo for Ryan's class for CGMA on: The Art of Color and Light



“Let your portfolio be an accurate representation of what you want to do professionally. Don’t just put stuff in because you think people want to see certain things”

2DA: Do you have any advice for aspiring artists wanting to start a career in the industry? Any portfolio dos and don’ts?

RL: Let your portfolio be an accurate representation of what you want to do professionally. Don’t just put stuff in because you

think people want to see certain things. You don’t want to be hired based on something that you don’t like to do.

2DA: If you could be any Disney character, which one would you be and why?

RL: Goliath from *Gargoyles*. An animated movie needs to be made. Who’s with me?

2DA: When you aren’t working on digital art and concepts, how do you enjoy spending your time?

RL: Playing video games, watching cartoons, or drawing/painting.

2DA: I love the color combinations you use in your work. How do you achieve these palettes and what brushes do you find yourself using most in your work?

RL: I try to go out and paint from life a lot, and I do a lot of studies. Sometimes, I can remember a certain palette, or sometimes I need to find a photo for inspiration. I don’t color pick because I’m trying to understand what’s happening between the light and the objects in the scene. As far as brushes are concerned, nothing too fancy; I’ve been using solid opaque brushes more often than not recently.

● Ryan’s *Wreck-It Ralph* visual development for Walt Disney Studios



Property of Walt Disney Animation Studios

2DA: I thoroughly enjoyed *Wreck-it Ralph*! What was it like working with Disney on this title? What were your favorite moments and which parts did you find a struggle?

RL: I couldn't believe my first job at Disney was working on video game-inspired stuff, so it was awesome. I think my favorite moment was seeing the first bits of animation trickle through, and the biggest struggle was keeping up with the amazing group of artists on the show.

2DA: You achieve wonderful lighting in your images. What's your technique and can you give any advice to us to accomplish the same quality?

RL: Observation over 'formulas'. Formulas can get you started, but observation of little nuances, how light interacts given specific circumstances, is where the money is at. Once you start relying on formulas, you stop observing, and it will show in your paintings.

2DA: Where do you draw your influences from for your personal and professional work?

RL: Traditional and digital painters, my co-workers, live action films and animation.

2DA: Could you tell us about any projects you are working on at the moment or in the future? ●

RL: I'm currently working on *Big Hero 6*, which will be coming out in 2014.

🕒 Artist Timeline

2010: Joined Walt Disney Animation Studios

2012: *Wreck-It Ralph* Released

2013: *Big Hero 6* Announced





● A scene created by Ryan for Disney's *Wreck-It-Ralph*



Property of Walt Disney Animation Studios

The Artist



Ryan Lang

Web: <http://ryanlangdraws.blogspot.com>

Art Gallery

Each issue the 2dartist team selects 10 of the best digital images from around the world. Enjoy!



Fearful Tales – Hansel and Gretel

Vanja Todoric

<http://vanjatodoric.blogspot.com>

Submit your images! Simply email jess@3dtotal.com





Rabbit

Gediminas Pranckevicius

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River Mountain

Ferdinand D. Ladera

<http://www.ferdinandladera.com>





Category VI

Bastien Grivet

<http://www.grivetart.com>





Test Subject

Marc Brunet

<http://www.youtube.com/user/bluefley00>

Big Friend

Byzwa Dher

<http://www.arte-grafik.com>

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▲ **Medieval Village**

Andrei Pervukhin

<http://www.pervandr.deviantart.com>

Rostam & Dragon ▼

Erphan Malek Hoseiny

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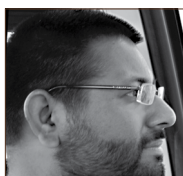
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VINOD RAMS

Sketchbook

Talented character and creature concept artist, Vinod Rams, who has worked for Wizards of the Coast, Blizzard Entertainment and Monolith/WB Games to name a few, shares his sketches of aliens, monsters and awesome creatures in this month's sketchbook article.

The Artist



Vinod Rams

Web: www.vinodrams.com

Vinod is a senior concept artist at Motiga, a new independent video game company in the Seattle area. He specializes in character and creature design.

Concept artist, Vinod Rams, lets us leaf through the awe-inspiring pages of his sketchbook...

I sketch for a multitude of reasons, but the main and most important reason is because it's fun. I see interesting faces, interesting people and interesting shapes everywhere – all of which compel me to put them down onto paper.

On a purely technical level, my sketchbook is used mostly for practice; you have to put in the hours in your sketchbook before you're ready to do that final piece. In musical terms, my sketchbook is where I get to 'freestyle' and not worry so much about making mistakes. Sometimes I'm actively trying to work out a problem, so I start sketching and I can usually find a solution. At other times I just zone out and draw weird shapes and start to form them in to characters or creatures.

I'm a character-focused artist, so if I'm not doing observational sketching, I'm usually coming up with characters. Sometimes these are for a greater story or project but mostly it's character design for the sake of character design.

Drawing in my sketchbook lets me into a world that's not quite real but just real enough for me to get lost in it. Lately when I sketch in my little travel sketchbook I like to draw in pen. It forces me to be more confident and less worried about making the perfect drawing. Sketching is a big part of my life – I'm almost never without my sketchbook, to the point that when I don't bring it along, people notice and worry that I've lost it!

Inspiration and ideas

The inspiration for my sketches come mostly from the world around me. Even though I don't do a ton of direct observational drawing, I still notice people and take note of how they look, the way they carry themselves and the clothes they're wearing. All of this feeds back into my imagination so I can build a visual vocabulary for my art.

Materials

I don't like drawing on super fancy paper, or in expensive sketchbooks. My little travel book usually gets pretty beat up so I'd rather it not cost a lot of money. I love drawing with Microns, Uniball, and Copic pens. But sometimes you can't beat a generic ball point pen that you stole from the bank. When I sketch in pencil it's usually with my trusty .7 mechanical pencil and usually with a medium or soft lead like HB or B.



PRO TIP

Personality!

Don't be afraid to let your characters go against type. If you're designing a big bruiser-type character try and give him some elements that show a softer side. Whether it's his expression or even some costume details, try anything to give your characters something outside the norm. It's easy to always draw angry and mean expressions, try to let your characters smile a bit more!

01



01

I like the large triangular shoulder and chest pieces on this guy. I was inspired by some of the designs of the French comic artist, Moebius



Sketching Techniques

I'm a messy sketcher. Often, when I'm drawing in pencil, my kneaded eraser is used more to shape my drawing than my actual pencil. I also like using a blue Col-Erase for my messy gestural stuff before going in with my mechanical pencil. When sketching with pen, I do a lot of quick marks to rough out the shapes before making more deliberate lines for details. You can still choose to rough things in lightly with a pen, even though it's a less forgiving medium.

02 If you're ever in a drawing rut, just sketch a random amorphous shape and try and fit a creature head into the shape. I usually end up with snub nosed aliens!

03 This guy probably has too much detail but I still like him. When in doubt add goggles

04 It's always nice to contrast organic forms with cleaner, hard-edged forms

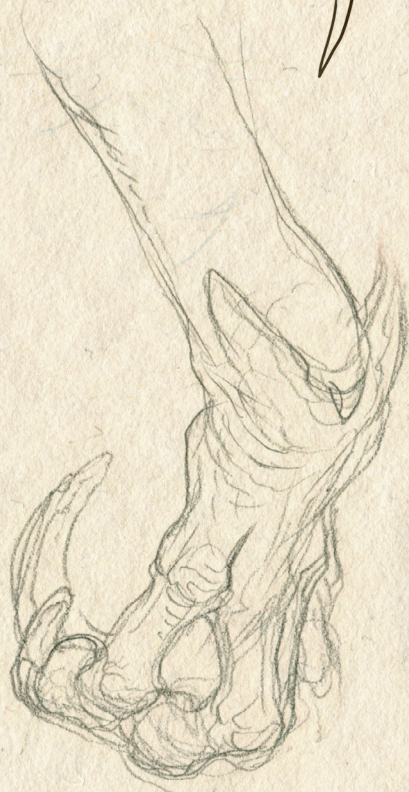




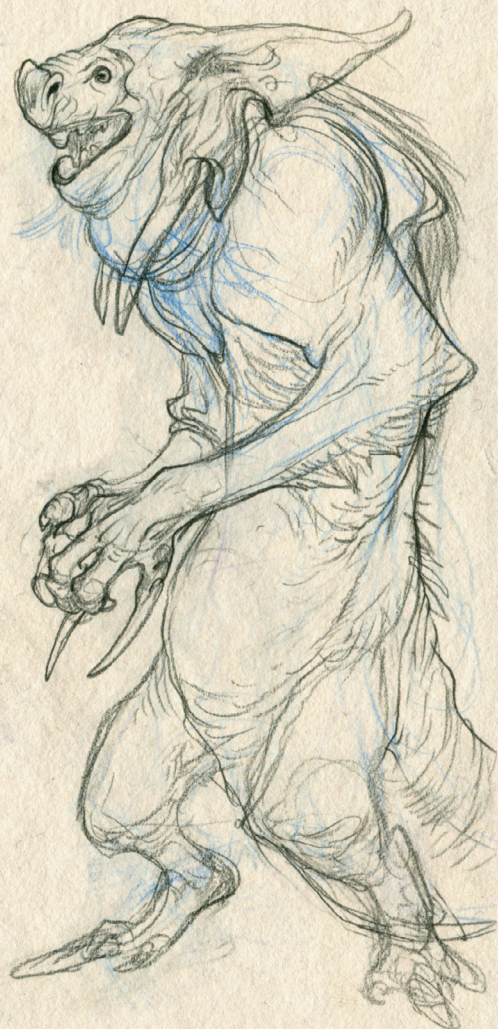
05



06



07



05 Repetition of form is a good principle of design, simply doubling the ear makes this guy more unique

06 I really like elongated muscular body types when it comes to my creatures. The action drawing above is something that's good to do when designing a creature – you can work out the anatomy by imagining how the creature moves.

07 Making your creatures behave human, or have human expressions, gives them character and helps them become more than just an animal



08



09



10

⚡ PRO TIP

Acting!

When you're sketching an interesting pose or expression it helps to physically do the pose or make the expression. Just like an animator would, you should try and get into your character's head to understand why they're in that pose or how it feels to pull that expression.

08 This drawing is using a more broken line type of sketching. You indicate form using volumetric shading as opposed to a tighter, cleaner, line drawing. You can sometimes get a more subtle expression out of this type of drawing

09 I finally got around to reading the Hobbit a few years ago and my favorite character by far was Beorn, so I was compelled to do my version of him. I kind of want to go back and draw all my favorite LOTR characters now!

10 Here's some exploration sketches for Beorn's head design. I used a combination of a few of these in my final sketch





SAVAGE
OPPRESS

14

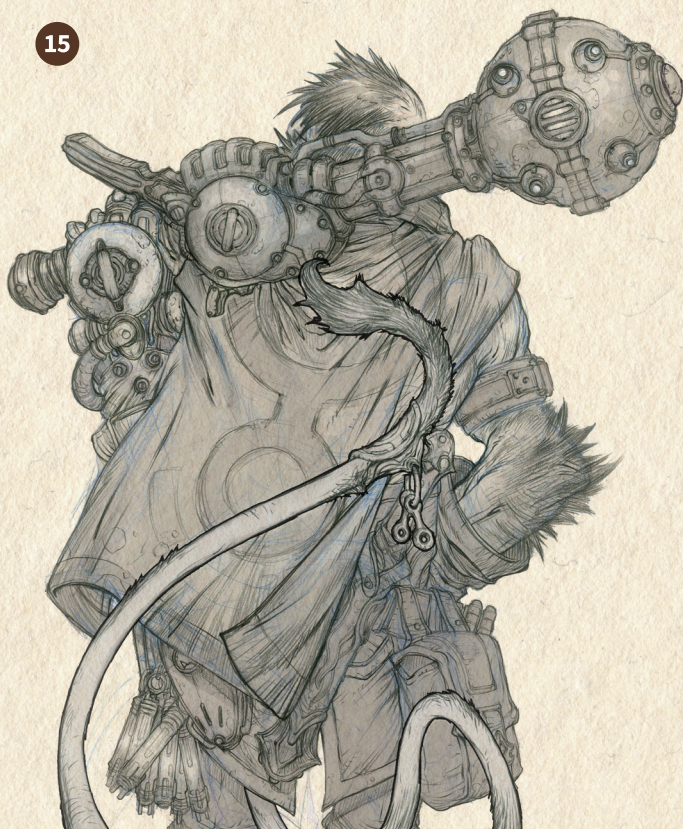
11 I love this guy's expression! I remember getting this drawing done really fast. If you're trying to capture a fleeting expression or action you sometimes need to get the drawing done quickly, rather than laboring over it

12 Never forget to give your characters a point of view. I suspect nothing ever gets past this guy

13 If left to my own devices I can get lost in rendering out anatomy, skin folds, and wrinkles!

14 A random page of doodles. Always push for unique silhouettes in your work

15



16



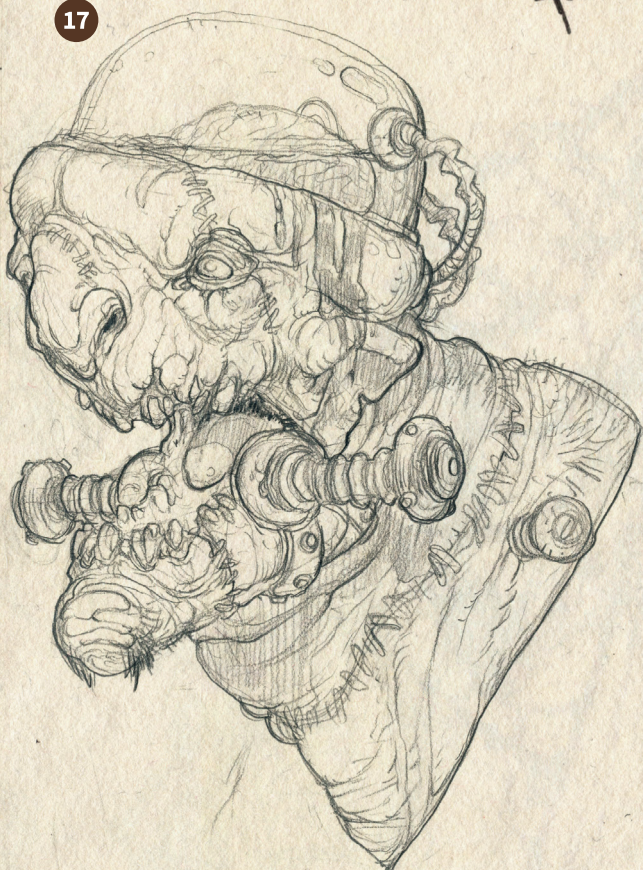
15 Here's the character I designed for the cover of the book of sketches I sell at conventions. He's like a sci-fi/fantasy version of Hanuman from the Hindu myth Ramayana, one of my favorite mythical characters to draw!

16 I feel like the sketch has a lot of motion to it, as if he's tilting back while thinking about something

⚡ PRO TIP

Failing is fun!

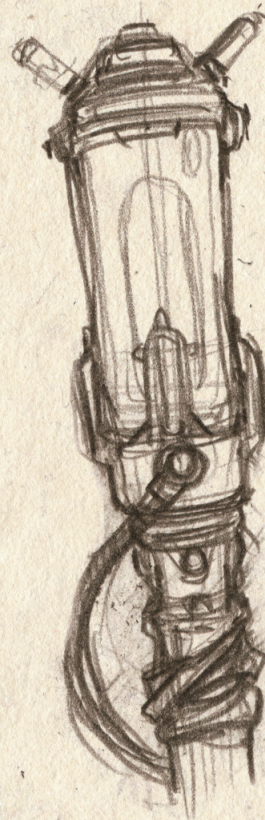
Your sketchbook is where there are no repercussions to making mistakes. Don't covet your sketchbook like it can never have a bad drawing in it. A good sketchbook shows playfulness and growth, not just pretty drawings.



17 Here's a new take on Frankenstein's monster. Someone needs to refill the fluid in his brain jar, it seems to be leaking!

18 I really like the attitude of this character. I remember being inspired by a long flowy sweater in a women's clothing store waiting for my wife to try on clothes. Inspiration is everywhere!

Your intuition will help
guide you.



19 For a while I was pasting fortune cookie
fortunes next to characters in my sketchbook.
It added a fun extra level of context to a
random sketch! These two cyberpunks seem
like wise mentor-type characters now

Your critical insights can provide
the stimulus for change.





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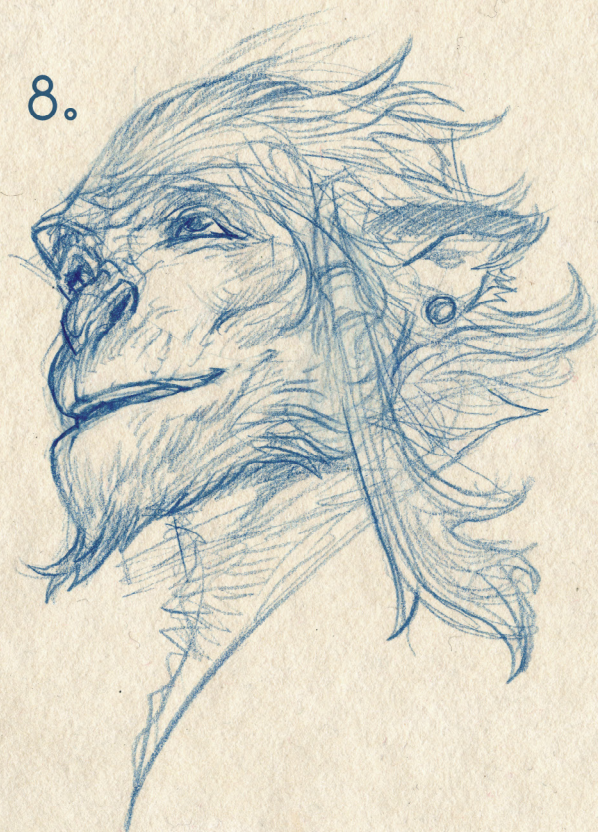
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22

21 More sketches of Hanuman. It's a challenge to find that perfect mix between human and animal that is pleasing to the eye, rather than jarring and off-putting

22 Here's another example of a sketch using proportions that I don't ordinarily draw. Your sketchbook is the best place to experiment with things like this!



23 I like the immediacy and energy of this pen drawing. I drew the thumbnail first as a guide and then just started designing this plucky goblin-type guy. He feels like he's in mid-motion and is a real, alive, character



24 When I design tech it's very rough around the edges, and very far from that slick TRON look. Non-organic forms can have a lot of character if you beat it up a bit!

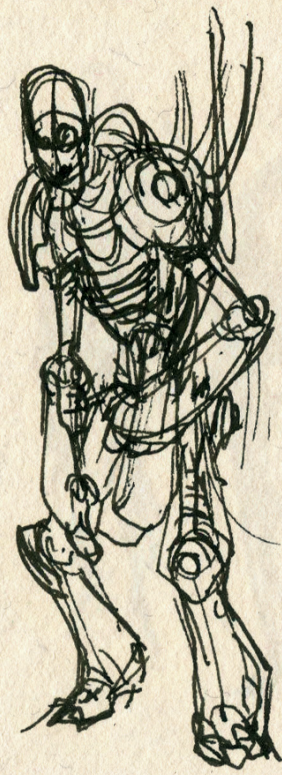
25 It's fun to break from your usual drawing style and really play with proportions sometimes. I have no idea what the rest of this guy looks like but I had fun with his crazy face!



SKETCHBOOK OF VINOD RAMS

- 26 Monkey men wearing hats! There isn't much more to say...
- 27 I have no explanation for this drawing. It's just weird
- 28 I'm happy with some of the interesting shapes and angles I used on this guy's face





29 You can add interest to a character by making them do a common action, like smoking a pipe, but replacing elements... like his hand!

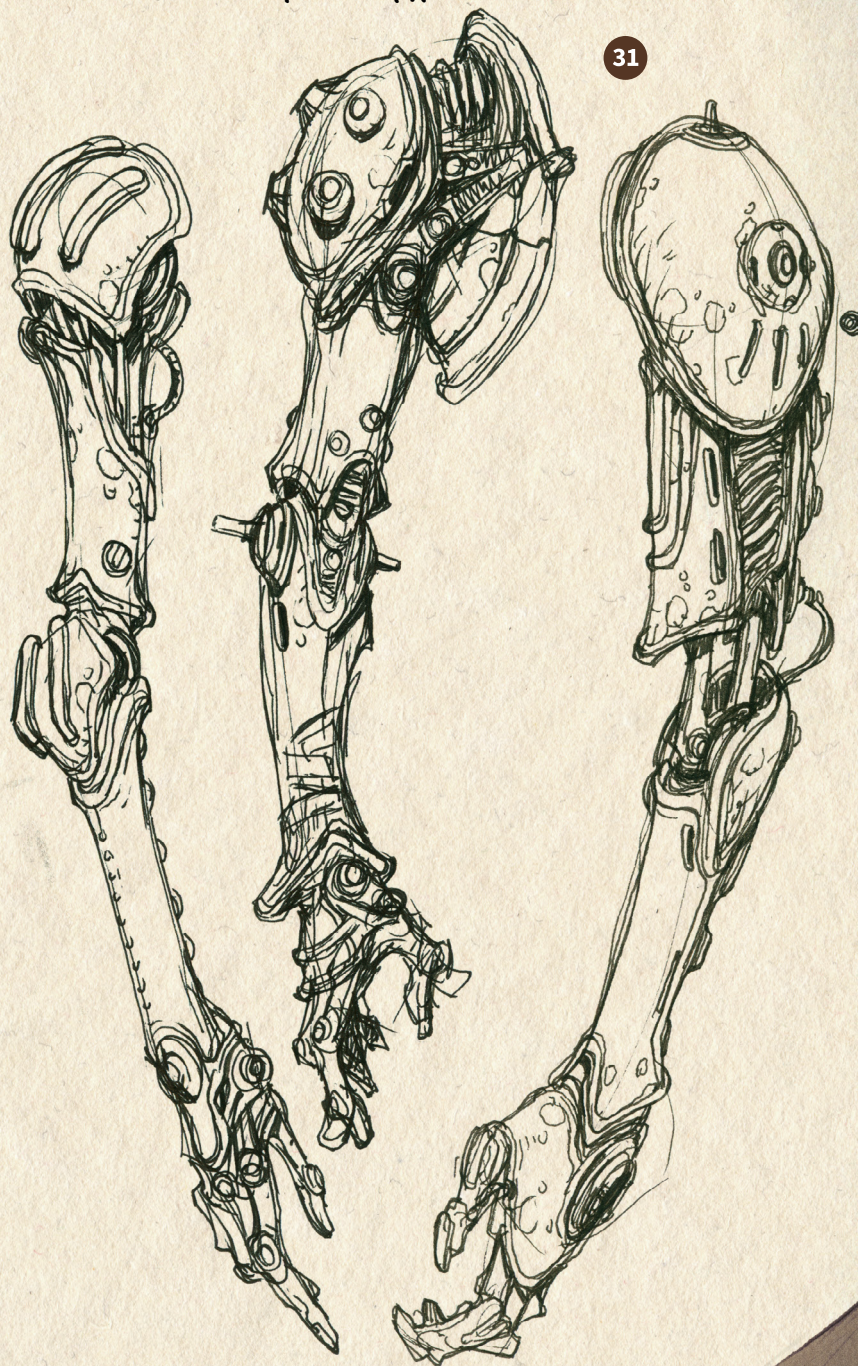
30 Another example of why beat-up tech tends to have more character than slick, clean, tech. I can imagine the way this guy sounds

29



30





31

32



33



31 When I want to come up with interesting ways to design mechanical forms, I work out the shapes just as I would if it were organic. I then figure out what type of mechanical forms can stand in for the organic counterparts

32 Some head studies for a lovable giant-type character. I remember smiling to myself while drawing these. It's good to get yourself inside the minds of the characters you create

33 If you're getting burned-out on gross monsters, try your hand at a fair skinned sexy elf-man. You have to work a completely different part of your art-brain. Less is more when it comes to making something beautiful



34

34 Here's the final design for this character. Pose and attitude go a long way to describing the type of personality you want to depict. A simple tilt of the head can do more for your drawing than rendering everything to death

35 This sketch is probably the stupidest thing I've ever drawn...

35



VR
47

2dartist

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and their artwork to adorn the pages of our
magazine. If you think you have what it takes,
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To submit, simply email Jess at
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How to illustrate femme-fatales

Shapes, color and theory are an important part of character design. You can create a feeling of good or evil in visual design by changing the combination of these. In this tutorial, Pyeongjun Park conveys key elements used to create a recognizable femme-fatale, while revealing industry tips and tricks used to portray this anti-heroine along the way ▶



The Artist



Pyeongjun Park

Web: <http://totorrl.cghub.com/>

Software Used:
Adobe Photoshop

Pyeongjun Park lives in Seoul, South Korea and is currently studying animation at university. Pyeongjun also works at VFX company Madman, and as a freelance illustrator for Applibot Inc.



Pyeongjun Park takes us through the creation of his femme-fatale anti-hero...

In this illustration, I focus on expressing the character's personality and unique qualities. Morsus is a hero who uses poisoned darts and needles to make the opponent blind or paralyzed. Instead of a filthy, muscular hero with a creepy mood, I thought it would be fresh to present a rather traditional femme-fatal, anti-hero model: slim, flirty, poisonous, and irresistibly beautiful.

In terms of technique, I put an emphasis on playing with the compositional facets to create a dynamic scene, and building details on clothes, such as texture and folds. I like half-realistic, half-cartoony expressions. I start with traditional painting methods to establish a basis and move on to special effects with Photoshop tools. I hope you have fun following my progress.

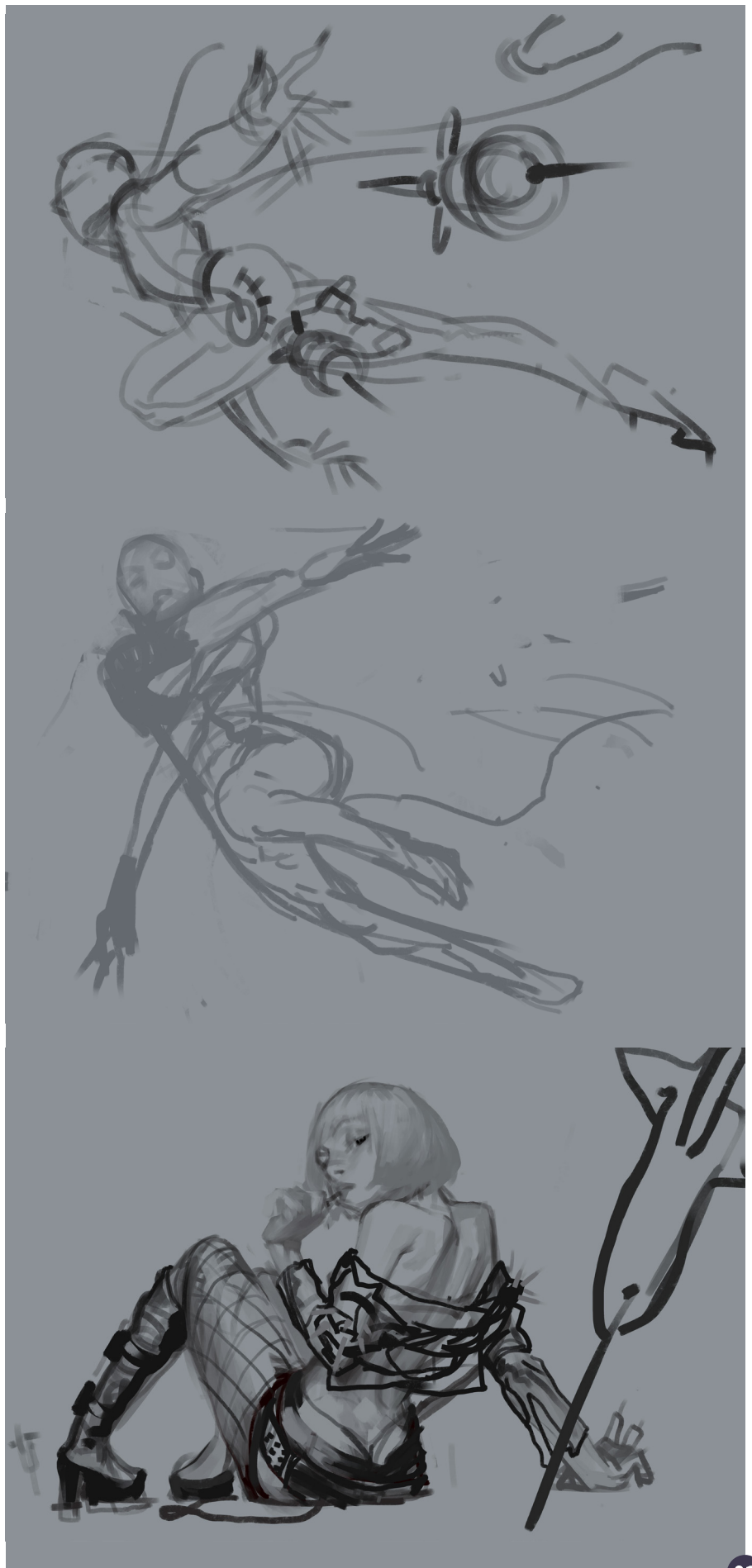
Let's move on to the actual steps.

01 Thumbnail sketch: I try to find a way to embody a dangerous and toxic feeling in the character. To make the mood even stronger, I design her to be a teenage girl; careless and ignorant of the outer-world, and thus even more hazardous, with punk-style touches to her outfit. The leather rider-jacket and short pants do their job in creating a defiant teen hero. I make three thumbnails to test out the possibilities and choose the one most fitting.

02 Color and concept: After the thumbnails, I move on to designating colors. As the leather jacket and pants are colored with a dark tone, the skin and hair color will be comparatively light. To really emphasize the contrast, I give her an albino look with white hair and red eyes. Taking the colors from a dartboard, I use green, red, and white on the leather jacket as an accent.

03 Rough painting: After designating the colors, I start painting right on top of the thumbnail. There is no defined rule for when to start building up the details. With this one, I start filling up the mass with colors and then move on to setting the direction of lights. This is the part I consider the most important.

As soon as the intrinsic colors are decided, I go on to elaborate the different rates of light and shades to make the object more solid and three-dimensional. In this step, the shading doesn't have to be too meticulous.



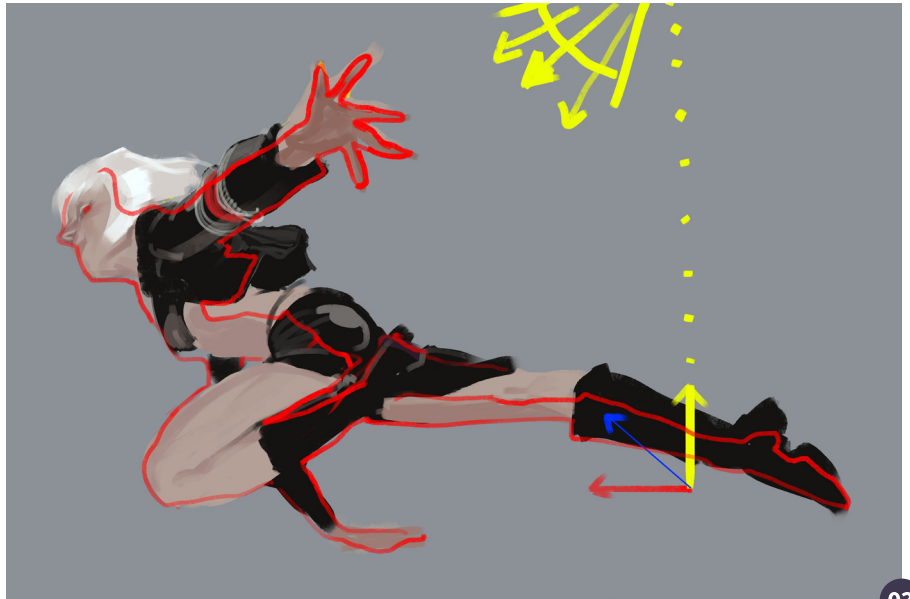


02

04 Make her pretty: The personality of the character is best shown in the face. I want my hero to look young and naive but strong and flirty at the same time. She's got a playful smile and decisive cat-eyes. With the light direction I set in the previous step, the facial expression was not visible enough, so I use reflected light to set details on the face. We're not moving towards details yet.

When I start a painting without a defined line drawing, I try to look at the piece as a whole. The more you focus on little individual parts in the beginning of the process, the higher the chance you will lose the balance and harmony of the entire composition. Just roughly setting the mood of the face is enough for now.

05 Paint all around: Now it's time to balance out the contradicting colors. The most important two facets are the skin and the costume. The dark leather cloth is thick, bold and highly reflective. The skin is, at least in this case, bright and moderate in value change. Begin with



03



04

noting the brightest highlights and carefully work on the details with mid-tones. This part actually takes the most time in the process.

realistic renderings. Utilize everything – anything you pass by on the street, images you collect while surfing online, and even yourself.

06 Face detail: Start to build up the detail. Observation is the best method for

Sometimes looking into a mirror solves a great deal of problems. ▶



05



06

“When you set white as an intrinsic color, it’s better not to consider the darkest dark as too dark, especially if your goal is to contrast white with another intrinsic color”

At this moment, I was specifically working on the face. The basic structure is already built, so use the texture brush to give a detailed description on the skin, and use very thin brushes to give accents on subtle parts such as eyebrows and lashes.

07 Detail on the hands: Gesture is another crucial component in character design. More active and dynamic parts, such as hands and feet, tend to grab more attention. The most significant facets you need to consider while depicting hands are:

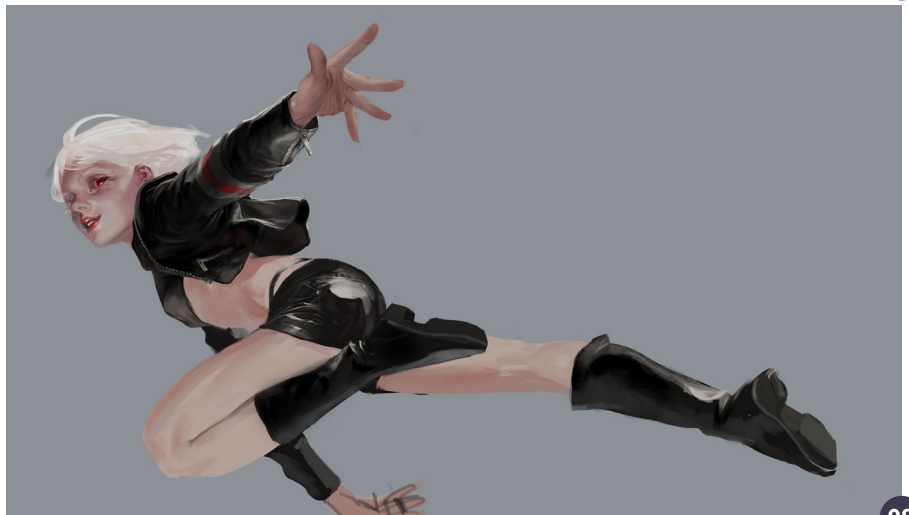
- Gesture
- The directions of the fingers
- The back of the hands
- Folds in the skin according to movement

When the fingers are stretched like this, the back of the hand is supposed to be bent around like a bow. The tip of the fingers gather up to create an arch-shape line. Such little flows and details make the gesture much more plausible. Once the gesture is settled down, move on to the folds.

08 Painting a leather texture: We move on to detailing the leather jacket. Actually, it looks more like a latex jacket, because I want the lighting to be more effective. The contrast between the highlights and the darkest parts is more obvious in latex than leather. The key point in developing the latex surface is to put strong highlights on the edges of the folds, whether they’re projecting or descending. Once the lighting and shading is somewhat finished, lay a texture to complete the jacket.



07



08

09 More details: It’s time to work on the hair. Achieving shades of white can be tricky. When you set white as an intrinsic color, it’s better not to consider the darkest dark as too dark, especially if your goal is to contrast white with another intrinsic color. The original directions of individual strands of hair are not

supposed to be visible from the viewpoint, but use your imagination to figure out where they come from.

To support the dynamism of the posture, I give a little bit of movement to the hair. Even in a perfect coiffure, there are always some messy strands

PRO TIP

Setting the Color window in HSB Sliders mode makes it more convenient to choose the right color for shading. Just adjusting the B (Black) rate with the intrinsic color will make the perfect color for the darkened area.

To create a color for the reflected lights, adjust H (Hue) to make it closer to the reflector. Once you know how to utilize the Color window, you can easily arrange the more natural, harmonious color palette.



sticking out from the main-stream flow of hair. These little details make the work more realistic.

10 Accessory design: In this step, we work on giving a personality to the outfit. The clothes are what creates and supports the identity of the character. The viewers, by simply looking at a character, will have no idea who this character is, what kind of business she is engaged in, what kind of society she belongs to etc.

Clothes serve as an answer to the questions that emerge in the viewer's mind. Studs, a belt, mosaic-patterned tights explain what kind of girl she is, so we should make them look real. Without these details, the coat loses that hardcore, punky feeling. Mismatch tights give a unique identity. I add the belts on the boots so it won't look too simple compared to the other parts of the outfit. ►



09



10

11 Weapons design: Layers come in handy if you know how to play with them.

For developing the darts, I separate the layers because they're overlapping with the figure. It's easier to build up more detail with the separate layers. You will also realize how convenient it is to separate the layers once you start playing with the special effects.

The design of the dart is inspired by a syringe, to emphasize the poisonous aspect. I do think the color of the poison is a bit cliché, but the color combination is somewhat associated with the dartboard, so I leave it as it is for now.

12 Organizing the character: I put patches on the back of the coat to enhance the teenage, punky, cute aspects of the girl character. Buttons are there for fun.

Now it's time to arrange and organize. Flipping works as a good method, as mistakes can be more visible when the image is flipped. I fix the awkwardly prominent colors, shapes and shadings. When the contrast in shading is disturbing, soften it with a brush with low opacity; rub the contradicting part with the mid-tone of the two colors.

13 Mood of color: In fact, the best method for making the character pop out is to eliminate the dull background. The figure has simple variations of color and high brightness, so I decide to use a vivid color for the background.



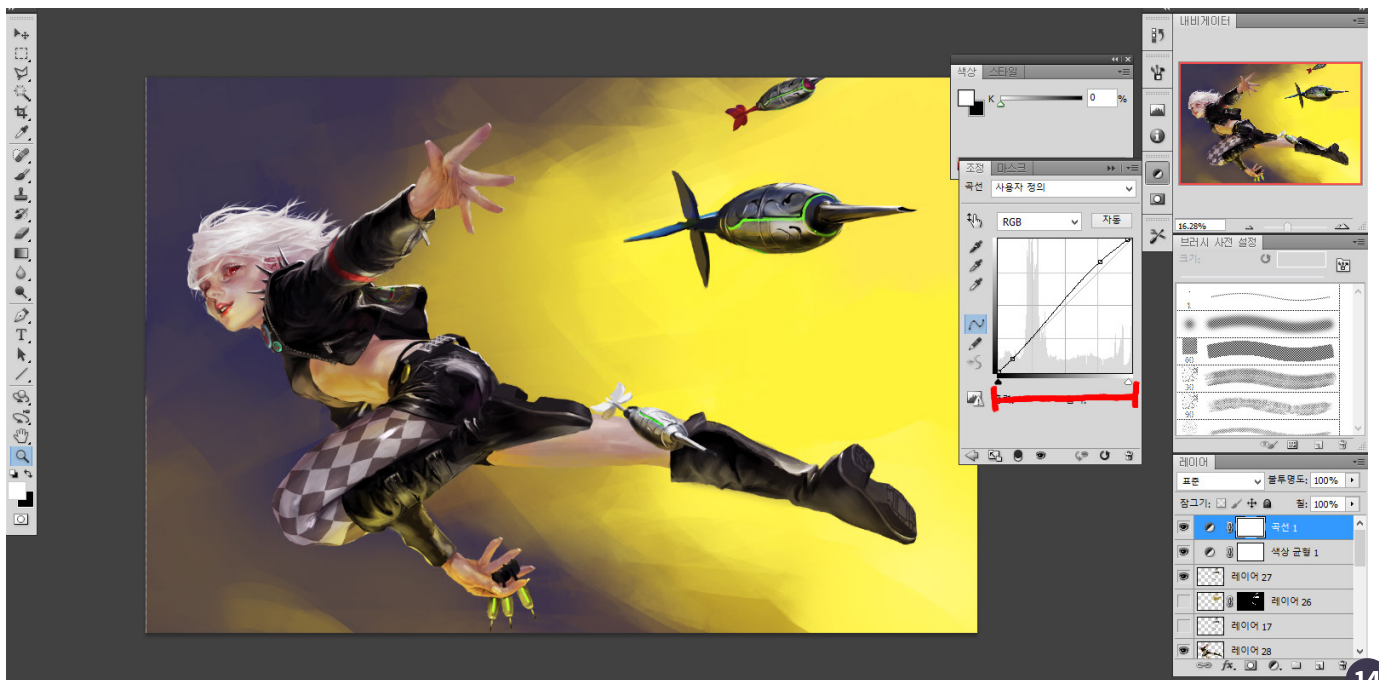
11



12



13



14

First, choose a color that you feel is right and then play with Hue/Saturation (Ctrl+U). Once you choose the right color for the background, apply the toned-down version of the same color on the character as the reflected light. It puts the figure more believably in the foreground.

14 Color corrections: Before finishing up, open the Curve window and take a look at the color range. If the graph is scattered evenly, it means you have used an assorted variety of colors. It's not completely necessary, but it does give your work a profound reasoning.

Use the Color Balance window (Ctrl+B) to set the mood (you can also use Adjustment Layer). Setting contradictory colors – such as cyan versus yellow, or blue versus orange – for the dark and bright parts make the color arrangement more playful, and gives the mass a more three-dimensional feeling.

15 Realistic rendering: Using some Photoshop tricks is helpful to give more of a photographic quality to the scene.

First, go to Effect Blur and click on Lens Blur. You'd understand this effect if you're familiar with photography. Apply the same amount of blur on the objects regardless of how far they are from your eyes.

Second, go to Filter and then to Lens Correction. Choose Custom option to play with Chromatic Aberration. Play with this tool to make it look like a photograph and you will see the red and blue lines surrounding the borders of the objects. ●



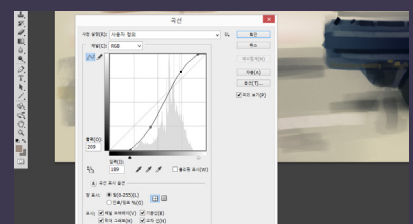
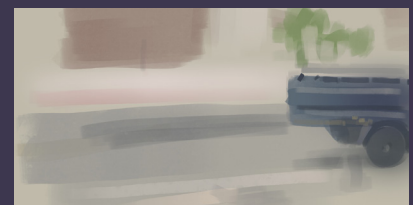
15

PRO TIP

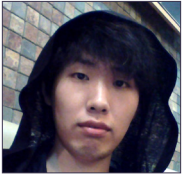
Using Chroma

This method is not used in this case but is helpful in most situations. Color the entire scene in a low chroma and mid brightness in the beginning, and then open Curve window to adjust the values. Heighten the chroma in the brighter part.

Starting with a low chroma range is crucial because using Curve heightens the chroma in dark areas as well, and when the dark color is in high chroma it might look too saturated and end up standing out too much.



The Artist



Pyeongjun Park

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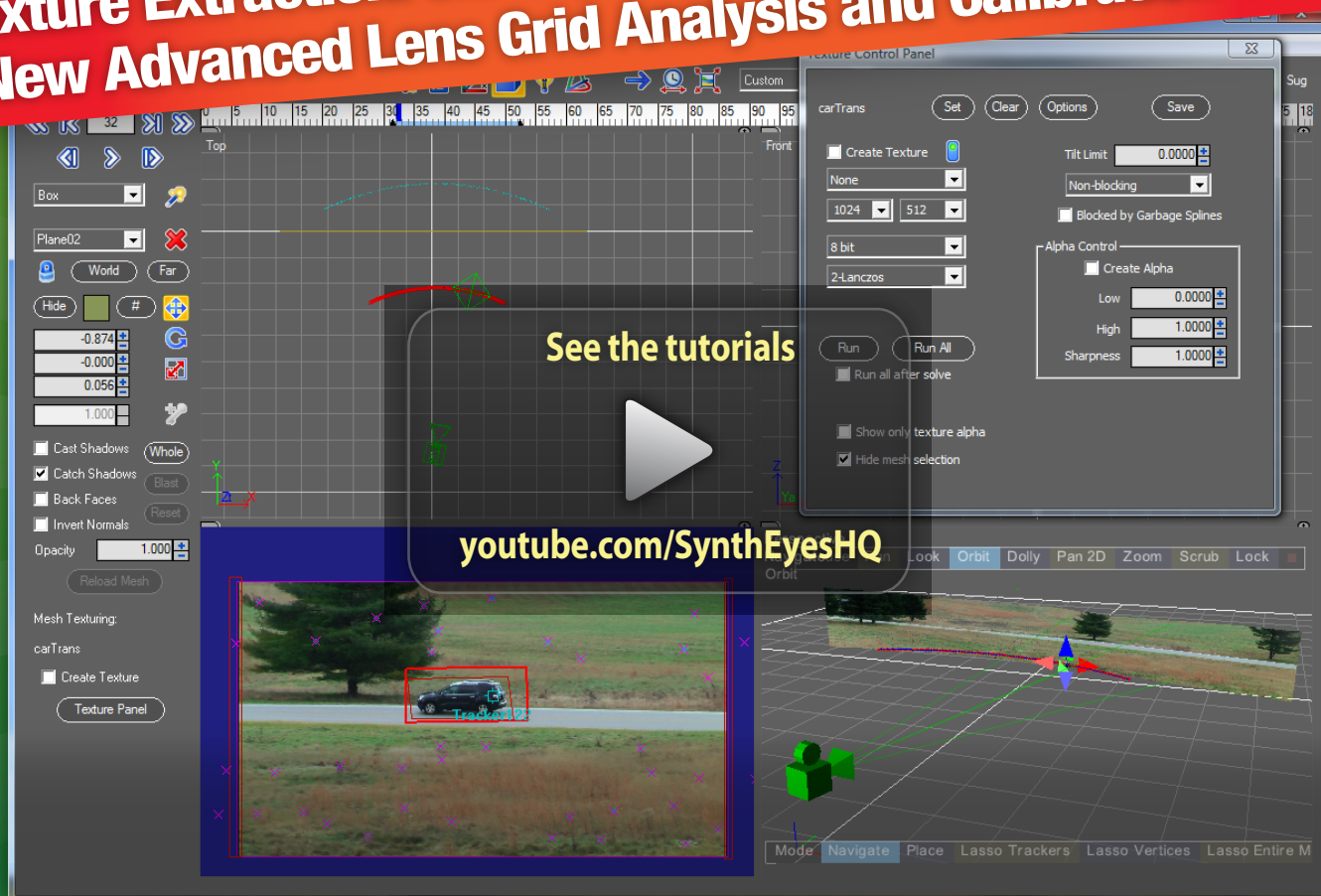




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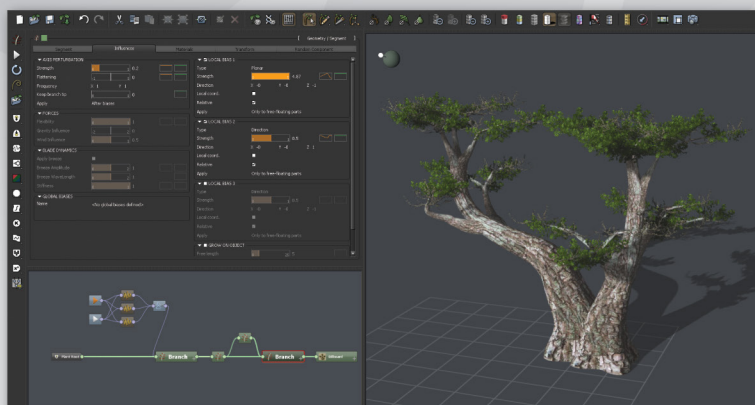


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Create unique vehicles

Fictional universes are often used in games and films, with fantasy being a popular theme! They are made up of many different features such as characters, environments and vehicles, and it is important that all these elements work together to create a believable environment and society to engage the audience. In this tutorial, YongSub Noh takes you through a step-by-step guide to creating a fantasy vehicle from a concept perspective. ▶



The Artist



YongSub Noh

Web: <http://yong.cghub.com>

Software Used:
Adobe Photoshop

YongSub Noh is a self-taught, 3D animation artist from South Korea. He currently works for NCsoft and enjoys playing PC games, playing the drums and working on concept art in his spare time.

YongSub Noh shares his secrets for designing and painting a fantasy vehicle...

This tutorial will aim to show the skills and techniques involved in creating a medieval fantasy-themed vehicle in Photoshop.

OK, let's begin!

01 Sketching the concept: As always, the first thing to do is generate an idea in your head. I have come up with an air balloon. The basic shape consists of a huge balloon with a basket beneath it, but as this is the fantasy genre, we will create something a little more fantastical and adventurous.

First, we need to create a simple silhouette. As I have mentioned before, small details are not important at this stage; just focus on expressing the basic blocked image in your head.

I think the image might be a little boring as a lone air-balloon, so I start to sketch in a little of the background too. In this instance, I draw in a

low horizon underneath the vehicle to give the impression that it's drifting just above the ground.

Now, if this was concept art for the vehicle alone, than these elements would not be necessary. But,

by giving prominence to the main subject, you can add in a little story and imagination to the background – which is definitely worth it when looking at your image as a whole, rather than a simple concept.



01



02

“Don’t worry about creating perfect artwork here; when drawing a subject with bilateral symmetry, it’s very hard to match everything up perfectly, even for experienced artists”

02 Refining the image: It is starting to take shape quickly. It’s important to progress from a simple shape to a more complex and beautiful form with an easy and relaxed mind. The process of drawing is very similar to the process of sculpting; you don’t need to think about small flaws at this stage.

I decide to set the light at the top-left side and add more details by putting some block color in, therefore balancing the whole image.

03 Using Flip to check for errors: Don’t worry about creating perfect artwork here; when drawing a subject with bilateral symmetry, it’s very hard to match everything up perfectly, even for experienced artists. This image shows how I can overcome this difficulty using digital software.

First, horizontally flip the image using Image > Image Rotation > Flip Canvas Horizontal; any imbalances or dents will become apparent. You can draw and fix from this angle, then flip your image back.

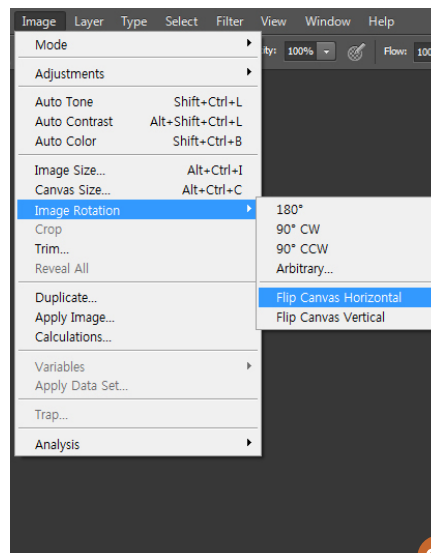
You should check the discrepancies in your image with this function as often as you can to maintain a realistically composed image.

When my city is mostly blocked in, I add a lake to the forefront of my picture.

04 Working with symmetry: At this point, I think that my image is well balanced and symmetrical. You can simply copy one side, flip it, then paste it on the other, which will make the picture entirely symmetrical. Personally, I don’t like doing that. Your image would appear perfect, but somehow feel inhuman and unnatural, which, in my opinion, makes it lose its appeal.

Also, it is easier to express a sense of volume if you are able to draw in a rhythm that fits the shape of your vehicle, building up the highlights on a dark base. It is better for maintaining a general stability.

05 Adding more detail: Now let’s add more detail. I first add a propeller underneath the basket as an assistant power source, and then add a long bar on the left to act as a sail. ►



- 01** Generating the shape of the vehicle
- 02** I start to block in color
- 03** I use Photoshop tools to flip my image and fix any errors
- 04** I consider the use of symmetry in my image
- 05** My image starts to take shape as I add more detail



When you draw, please do not concentrate on details but focus on overall balance. If the overall balance and big shapes are somehow amiss in your picture, the quality and reception of the whole piece will suffer; regardless of how the small details are done. The quality of the overall concept artwork is always more important than any of its detail.

06 Tweaking the color: I now start to tweak some of the highlights and color in the picture. My first thought is that the whole image is too murky, so I use the Levels function in Photoshop to make it brighter.

You can also use Brightness/Contrast functions instead of Levels; those functions produce fairly similar results. Personally, I believe that the Levels function is more versatile, especially within this particular workflow.

The area that first gets light will be the top of the balloon. It is also the closest to the viewer, so I need to emphasize the brightness and create highlights to make it stand out.



06

07 Refining the leather texture: I also polish up the intertwined ropes. I decide on a leather material for the balloon, so I use the Maple brush to depict the rough feeling of leather.

Now, this is just my style; there are lots of brushes to express materials and you can even create your own brush, so feel free to experiment with different styles.



07



08

08 Reflected light: This image shows my design with a very faint reflected light on the dark side of the balloon. Proper use of reflected light can add more depth to the subject, and make the colors and light on the dark side richer. Darkness is not just black. There are lights in the dark sides. When you observe those lights and express them properly, then you'll have quality artwork with rich colors.

09 More detail: As my balloon nears completion, I start on polishing the small details and adjusting the light and dark areas.

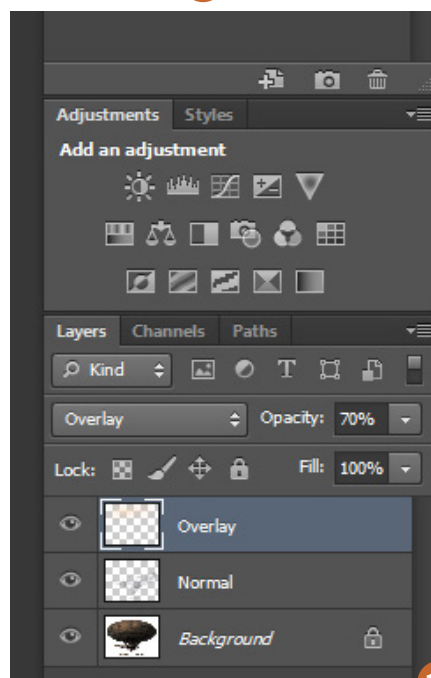
As I mentioned before, it's good to progress from a simple silhouette to a complex and detailed picture. Those small details will make my balloon more realistic.

10 Final touches: This image shows how I use Overlay and Hard Light layers to help me express light. To do this, create a new layer and change its option to Overlay then rub it with a soft brush.

I also create a layer in the middle to express reflected light. I don't change any options in this layer; I simply use it in its normal state with tuned Opacity values.

I prefer to have the whole drawing in one layer and use more layers to express lights and other special effects. This method really depends on your preference as an artist though, so feel free to have your own style.

11 It's complete! Now it's finally complete! It looks like a huge merchant air-balloon anchored to the ground, with appropriately shaded light and dark areas, a good overall balance and nicely-finished small details. ●



10



09

06 I start to tweak the highlights and coloring on my vehicle

07 By experimenting with brushes, I refine the leather texture

08 Tiny details in lighting make my image more realistic

09 I add smaller details as I near the end of the process

10 I adds the final touches to the vehicle

11 This is my final image of a medieval fantasy-themed vehicle



11

The Artist



YongSub Noh

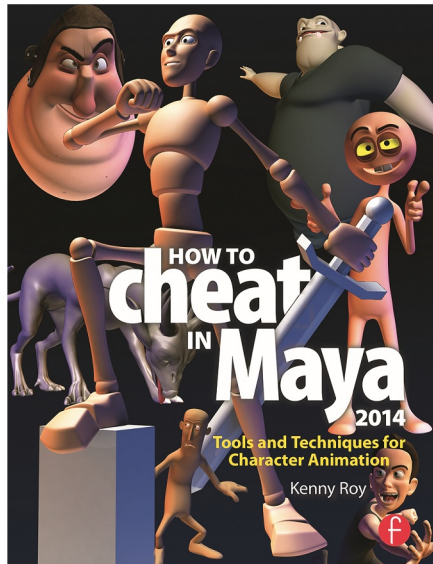
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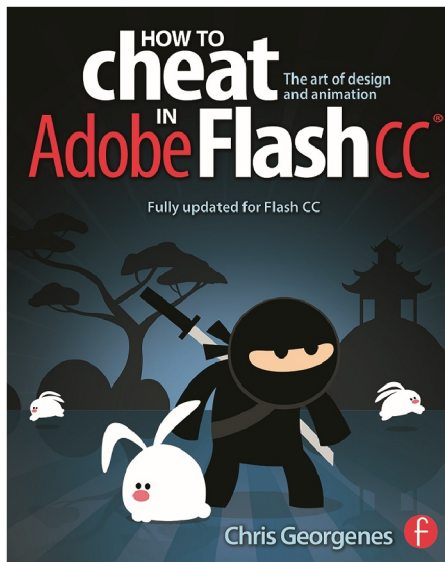
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Learn to paint beastly battles

What makes a great fantasy battle scene? I'd have to say a dramatic atmosphere, a multitude of characters and a definite distinction between the two battling sides (you want to be able to see who you're rooting for!) As for scale – the larger the better! Creating a gripping, busy scene can be tricky, I hear you say! In the following tutorial, Piotr Foksowicz shares lighting tips and tricks to help you achieve such a scene! ▶





The Artist



Piotr Foksowicz

Web: <http://www.facebook.com/piofoks>

Software Used:
Adobe Photoshop

Digital Painter and concept artist, Piotr Foksowicz, has created many pieces for card games and book covers. He especially likes to create fantasy, post-apocalyptic and science-fiction images.

Piotr Foksowicz shares his tips and tricks to convey a fierce battle scene...

Inspiration for painting may come from many sources, and I often have plenty of ideas about the way I want my image to look.

When you start sketching, it's a good idea to sketch out ideas and then choose the main theme. You could also start with the background of the scene, though this requires you to already know where you are going with it and insert enough information.

My goal in this tutorial is to show you clear and simple key-steps in the creation of this image: **Primal Rage**.

The basic concept for the image is to show a battle between two, wild primitive tribes on the African savanna. With this in mind, I create a story by showing small snippets of narrative, such as the moment during the battle when the main character gets his one and only opportunity to blind his powerful enemy.

Thinking of the historical context too; the scene should comprise of primitive, very simple weapons. The primitive fighter uses weapons that were made from stones, bones and wood.

An important part of my work is to consider the characters of the two hostile tribes. From my initial pool of ideas, I decide the defenders



and the aggressors should have unequal power. The defense team is more human and characters wear leather and fur clothes, and the attackers are more primitive and brutal – they wear bones as trophies.

I also consider the idea of cleverness vs. brute force. I want to keep this in mind when creating the atmosphere and when hinting at elements in the back-story.

01 Idea: The picture tells a story without the need for words, and you need to focus on the storyline in your image in order to hold the viewers' attention.

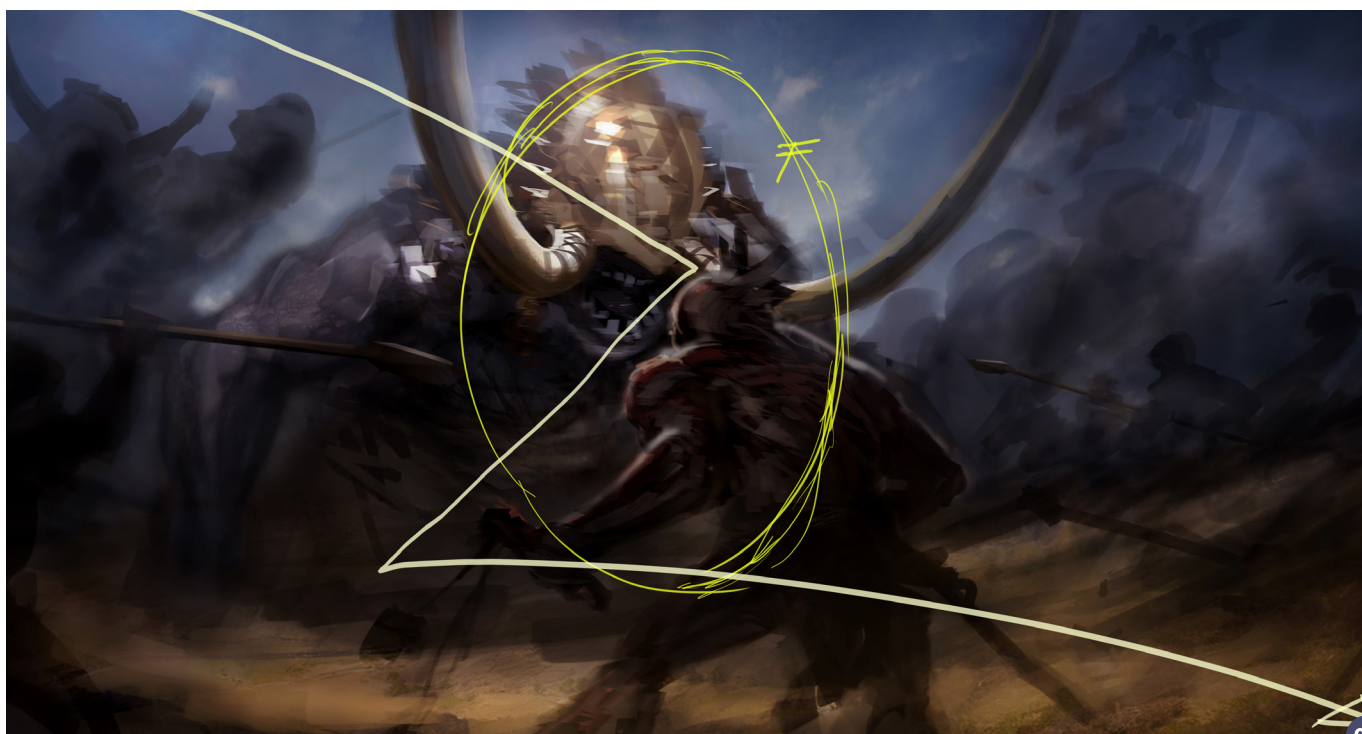
I sketch two fighting figures in the central section of the composition, as I'm trying to choose the best place for them. At this stage, I'm not too concerned about the background. I only support the two figures by placing an array of fighting

figures around in the background. I also begin to make a note of how the elements are going to be arranged in the final piece.

I want to depict a scene where defenders are trying to save their families, who are in the village located in the background. I choose to create an early morning light as it helps me set up the atmosphere of a surprise attack.

02 Sketch and composition: I start my work by sketching a few drafts on canvas. I then quickly arrange elements in this simple, colorful draft to find the right composition for the image. I look for the potential light source, color and direction until I end up with something I'm happy with.

I'm trying to sketch small thumbnails at this point, because I really don't want to concentrate on details. At this early stage it's a good idea to





03

“I like to collect a range of reference material as this helps me to understand the topic that I am painting”

figure out what goes where in the frame, because if you choose a bad sketch it will cost you time later down the line.

I also increase the image dimensions after I pick up the most interesting sketch – which will let me arrange all of the elements within it.

03 Start painting: After I have all the information that I need, and after I have chosen a sketch, I start to translate my imagined ideas to the screen.

If everything is clear and I'm still satisfied with my idea, I start to develop the sketch further and

apply rough colors to it. At this stage, I continue keeping the concept simple as I still want to be able to make changes without big losses later on.

I also want to consider the focal point and composition at this stage too. This is very important, particularly when you create a big battle-scene with many characters in the background. It gives you a chance to make changes in the characters' location in a very fast and easy way, and you don't need to repaint everything, so you can save a lot of time.

04 References: At the start of a project, I like to collect a range of reference material, as this helps me to understand the topic that I am painting. I then make a folder of photos and artwork that I can draw inspiration and visual reference from.

You should spend a few hours collecting information from the internet, as gathering reference material will help you understand the topic you are painting. These can be shots from your camera, magazine pictures or images from websites – all of this will help you to perfect details such as lighting and proportions.

The best way to start building the basic concept for your image is to choose some key words. I use 'primitive force', 'wild', 'feral', 'tribe', 'Africa' and 'leather'. When inspiration comes, I think it is very important to write it down on a piece of paper or on your computer.

During my research time on the internet, I find an old computer game and realize that my image could be a cover for it. I find it funny, and decide to name my image 'Primal Rage' after it. ►



04

- 01** The initial sketch
- 02** Arranging the elements to finalize a good composition
- 03** Adding rough colors to develop the sketch further
- 04** Using reference images to help refine the image

05 Adding details: When we have the final color palette and the shape and design of the characters, we can turn to the final detailing stage.

I use hard brushes and set the Opacity to 50-70. I then start working on the background by adding more detail to the sky and ground.

I check a few composition tests for the main character's location in the scene and pick the one that best suits the story. I decide on the arm position of the monster and decide that it should be more dynamic as it's more compatible with the composition.

06 Lighting: Lighting brings the image alive and defines the space, and this is a good stage at which to experiment with color and light.

On my image, I use simple soft brushes to define the light a little bit more and try to make it more dynamic. To get this effect, I use the Overlay layer or Multiply. I add a red element to the human weapon because later in this place there will be a flame. I also use a bit more contrast.

07 Color adjustment and details: When I'm satisfied with the progress, I start painting on top of the atmosphere lighting. This pretty much locks-in the design with the new, heavier lighting.

It's also a good idea to ask yourself about what kind of things you want to feature in the environment you're working on. These decisions will help you develop the story in your image.



05



06

My next move is to put flames in the foreground and also add spears without their owners, as this shows chaos in the battle yard.

unresolved areas, particularly in relation to the overall mood.

08 Changes: Just as I'm ready to finish the painting, I notice that there are still

First, the color feels too saturated, so I desaturate the image.



07

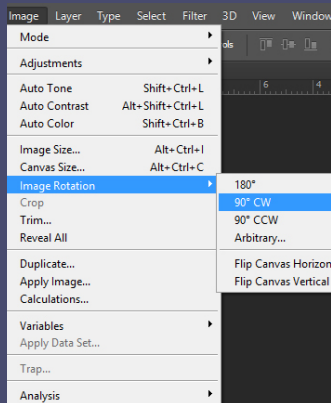
PRO TIPS

Use shortcuts

You can add shortcuts in Photoshop for new layers by using Edit > Shortcuts > Create A New Layer.

Turn the canvas

You should turn the canvas often, as it will help you to find mistakes.



I also add more cool color tones on the monster's mask. This creates an excellent contrast and so supports its use as a focal point. This is also the time for adding more detail to main characters.

During these final touches you must remember the light source!

09 Adding Textures: I add texture on the skull, skin and the fur. The best point at which to add the textures is when you have modeled all the elements.

You can add these elements in many different ways. I like to experiment with different types of layers and generally choose something from my experimentation that satisfies me most. Don't be



08



09

afraid to do this kind of experimentation because you can sometimes discover something very unusual, just by chance!

10 Details – final touches: I change the monster's teeth in my last step and also diversify the planes by adding smoke and dust. After adding these new details, I then match colors using Color Balance and Level. ●

- 05** Adding more detail to the background to build up the story
- 06** Defining the scenes lighting with a soft brush
- 07** Adding detail to the atmosphere
- 08** Continuing to make more changes to the color tones
- 09** Adding textures using Transform > Warp
- 10** Making the final adjustments to call the image finished



10

The Artist



Piotr Foksowicz

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In this two volume series, Scott Patton shows the processes he uses to create a 3D character for feature films. The first volume explores Patton's fast and efficient method for concept sculpting, skipping the 2D sketch phase all together and designing the character entirely within ZBrush®. He covers everything from blocking out the forms and fleshing out the muscles, to adding props, detailing with alphas and posing the character. The second volume covers methods for creating a final color rendering using ZBrush and Photoshop®. Patton shows how he squeezes the most from ZBrush's powerful renderer to create both a wide and close-up shot of the character. He then shares creative Photoshop tips and tricks to quickly get to a finished piece of concept art from the ZBrush renders, covering topics such as adding and refining skin texture, hair, eyes, shadows and scars. Patton also discusses how to create backgrounds that enhance the character and overall composition.



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The Artist



Derek Stenning

Web: <http://borninconcrete.com>

Software Used:

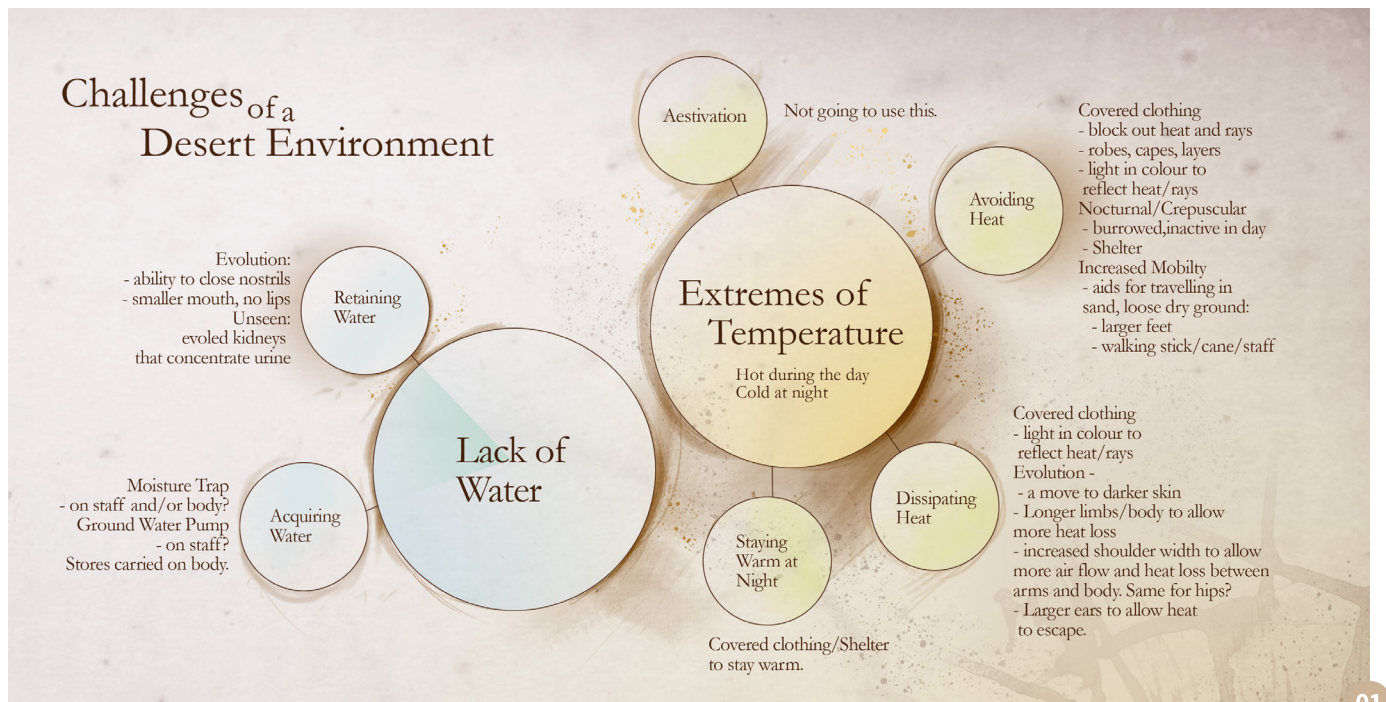
Adobe Photoshop

Derek has been a production artist in the games industry for over a decade. He has handled visual-development on titles for Nintendo, Activision and Marvel Entertainment, and is currently a senior concept artist at Microsoft.



Design desert characters

When designing characters for movies or video games, it's important to think about the different possible worlds and how a human character could have evolved to cope with his or her environment. In this tutorial, Derek Stenning shares techniques he uses in his design process, while exploring a multitude of factors that would affect and influence a character's evolution and anatomy. ▶



01

In this tutorial we will create a concept design for a character adapted to live in a desert...

In this tutorial we'll go through the steps I usually take when I'm in the process of creating a character design.

The assignment for this design is to create a character that has adapted, or evolved, to live in a desert environment. The design brief is pretty strict, in that even though the character has evolved, the character must remain human, with two arms, two legs, etc. So the evolutionary changes won't be drastic but they will (along with equipment and costume elements) help the character cope with the desert environment.

To warrant the need for these evolutionary changes, we won't be using any high-technology solutions to the challenges posed by the desert environment and we'll keep it fairly low-tech.

The one thing not included in the brief is a scenario or story. When design assignments don't have a scenario aspect to them I usually make one up myself, as it is a huge factor in making design decisions – what is this character doing in the desert anyways?

This tutorial will be no different, so I'm going to imagine that this character is some sort of scout, maybe he is tasked with patrolling the vast desert boarder areas of the society or group that he belongs to. This task will require

him to spend extended periods of time out in the desert alone and even though his people have evolved to be better able to cope with this environment, the scout will have to be equipped to carry out his mission.

01 Character and environment research: I always start my designs with a little look into the subject matter. I'm no expert in evolution, or in desert environments, so a little time spent learning about those major elements of this assignment could go a long way in informing my design choices for this character.

I look into the challenges of living in, or adapting to, a desert environment. The major issues are the extremes of temperature (hot in the day, cold at night), and a lack of water. To address the temperature issues, I'll have to find ways to avoid and dissipate heat in the design. I'll also have to find a way this character can retain or acquire water. The desert can also be a hostile

environment, so that will have to be reflected in the design.

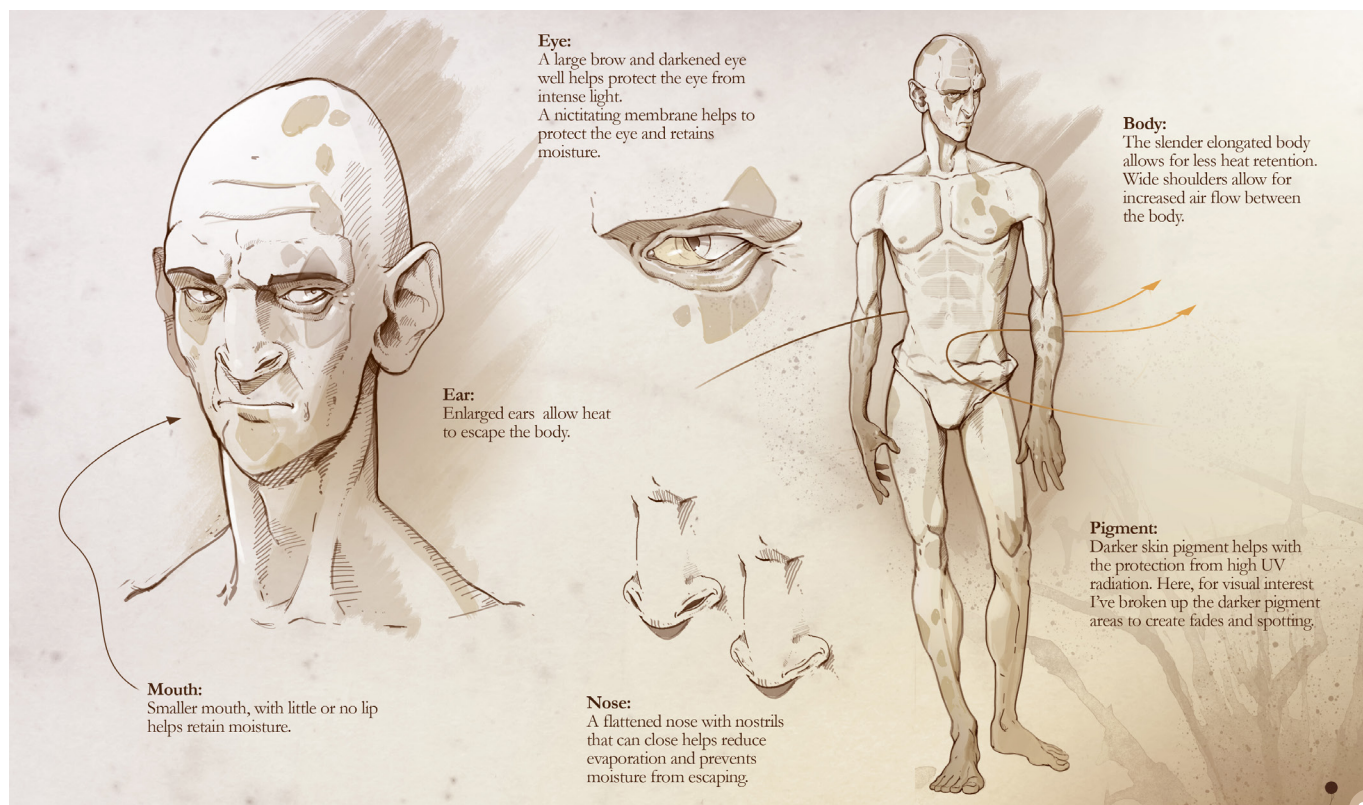
I take all my brainstorm notes and collect them on an idea map for quick reference.

02 Image reference gathering: After I've taken some time to think about the design, I'll spend more time gathering some images that I think can inspire me or introduce me to new ideas. References are a great way to expand your thoughts on a particular idea, so I'll search for what I think are topics related to the assignment at hand. I'll collect images that strike me, or contain something that seems to address a part of the design concept and put them on a reference sheet.

I limit my time doing this as I could search for reference images forever, but I'm only looking for little bits or elements that contribute to the design, and not for the perfect image. ►



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03 Evolution study: The brief states that the character has to remain human, so the first step in this design is to figure out the evolutionary changes to the body that have occurred to live in this desert environment.

I'm keeping the body long and lean, as this will allow for less heat retention and increased heat dissipation. Wider shoulders set the arms away

from the body and allow for increased airflow and more heat to escape. Darker skin pigment, here broken up into spots and fades for visual interest, aids in the protection from UV radiation.

On the face, a heavy brow, darker eye wells and the re-introduction of a translucent nictitating membrane protect the eyes from UV radiation and airborne debris. Larger ears facilitate more

heat loss and a smaller mouth decreases the loss of moisture. The nostrils have gained the ability to be open and shut when breathing to conserve moisture.

04 Silhouettes round one: I love using silhouettes when designing characters. It is a quick and easy way to rifle through various design options.



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Here, I've taken the character proportions outlined in the Evolution Study and I've started to apply costume elements that will aid the character's survival in the desert environment while helping our character to fulfil his role as a scout in the imagined scenario.

The options feature various elements to address the temperature issues, such as layered loose robes, cloaks and shade-providing hoods, headdresses, and carapaces. These elements are meant to double as shelters at night. Water-saving devices such as moisture traps and filters combine with water storage elements like bladders and cisterns. Protective footwear and armor combine with staffs to aid in traversing loose, rough and hostile terrain. Signal reflectors, flags and silks aid in communication across the vast desert expanse.

05 Silhouettes round two: We'll now narrow our options down by choosing our favorite designs and modifying them, with the addition of new ideas or elements from other options presented in the first round.

My first selection is Option 7 from the silhouettes as I really like the simplicity of it, and it seems to communicate the desert scout theme to me. But here, I add the signal silk from Option 5 and the signal reflector to his staff to aid in his scout role. I'll also add the moisture trap and the water collection bladders from Option 5 to give him some more water retaining/creation ability.



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Secondly, I choose Option 1 for further study, as it also seems to sum up the character. The only additions I make to him are extenuating the armor elements and adding some armor to his right arm as in Option 4, but in much more restrained fashion.

06 Grayscale rendering: The next step is to take these two designs further, to block out the interior costume design elements to see how they work. This is done in grayscale as this can be a faster way to render up a character as you don't have to worry about color, you can just focus on the costume/body elements.

The first design focuses more on softer materials like layered loose robes, the wraps and the signal silk. He seems like a traveler, and is somewhat ►

⚡ PRO TIP Flip your work

I often flip my images horizontally while I'm working them up as it's a great way to get a new perspective on my work. I get focused on drawing or painting, and I get so used to seeing my work in a certain way that it can be hard to look at it objectively. When you flip your work (as I said I usually flip it horizontally, but you can flip it vertically as well), you see your image in a new light, and usually a number of mistakes or things that look a little odd will pop out at you.



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mysterious, with his headdress and his face obscured by the moisture trap.

The second option explores my idea of louvered clothing. These garments can open up to allow the passage of air and to allow more heat to escape, and then can be closed up for warmth. This character also seems more aggressive with his armor and how the musket has been incorporated into his staff.

07 **Rough color composition:** After the characters have been blocked out in grayscale, the next step in this exploration is to add some color to help us evaluate the designs. Color is important, and using an overlay layer in Photoshop is a great way to quickly add color to your rough work. So here I'm going to explore a couple of different color schemes across the two designs and judge the results.

On the first character, I'm going to use a primary triad scheme. I want the hot temperature to come through on these, so I lay down a red overlay over my grayscale character. I then add the yellow and blues over this red until I get a rough idea of how this guy is going to look.

On the second character, I start with a red base with a little more blue in it, and then proceed to explore a more analogous scheme that I think might look good in a desert environment.

08 **Creating the final design:** After weighing-up the two designs, I decide to move forward with the first character option.



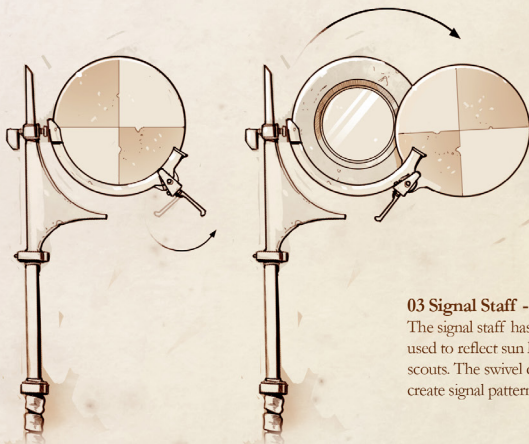
08

01 Supplies -

Carried on the back, this parcel contains: a ceramic vessel that carries food and doubles as a stove, 4 additional signal silks (in 4 different colours) and bedding.

**02 Shelter -**

The large headdress unfolds into a small single person shelter. This shelter is used to avoid the hottest periods of the day, to bed down for the night, or to provide protection from desert storms. The staff is separated in two, with the bottom portion extending to become the main support for this shelter.

**03 Signal Staff - Reflector Mirror**

The signal staff has a mirror with a hinged swivel cover. This mirror is used to reflect sun light to create communication signals to other scouts. The swivel cover can be used to interrupt the reflected light to create signal patterns or morse code-like messages.

“I’m also moving forward with this design because it has more emotional impact, and hits on the solitary, somewhat mysterious nature of the desert scout”

This version seems to hit more of the design criteria: the loose, layered robes and the large headdress (which I’m imagining will fold out into a shelter) help to block out heat radiation; the moisture trap, that collects moisture in the water bladders, helps with water retention; the footwear increases the sole surface area, and the staff will aid in traversing the loose, rough terrain. The signal staff and the signal silk (one of several carried), also help this scout communicate across the desert expanse.

I’m also moving forward with this design because it has more emotional impact, and hits on the solitary, somewhat mysterious nature of the desert scout.

Now that I’ve made my choice, I’ll refine the character a little more. The rough color pass will be tightened up to make the image more presentable and a few changes will be made to strengthen the design.

09 Additional design details: Now that the final design is done, I’ll create a few sketches of additional design details. These quick sketches will help flesh out elements of the character design that don’t come through in the image from the previous step and communicate additional design ideas.

These include a detail of the supply pack carried by our scout, a detail showing how the large headdress folds out into a shelter to protect the character from the environment (whether from the heat of day, the cold of night, or a desert storm), and finally a detail of the signal reflector mirror that is encased on the end of the staff.

10 Compiling the design sheet: The last thing to do is to compile the design materials onto a single page. This will serve as our design sheet that would be used to present the final design to the client, art director, creative director etc. So I’ll take the final design render, the additional design details, and since the facial area is half covered by the mask of the moisture trap, I’ll include the head elements from the evolution study as well, and we’ll arrange all the images on a page with the relevant notes.

At this point, if there are no revisions needed, the design is finished. If this design were to be

approved, we would then move forward with creating a turn-around and potentially more detailed images so other artists could start to implement the design into the final product. ●

PRO TIP **Presentation**

Concepts are about communicating ideas, and you can communicate your ideas better by adding a level of presentation to your work. Of course, a good design that is executed with a high degree of skill is the most important part of creating a good presentation, but you can make your concepts stronger by clearly labeling them, following naming conventions, and including additional thoughts and information.

01 Body -

The slender elongated body allows for less heat retention.
Wide shoulders allow for increased air flow around the body.

02 Eye -

A large brow and darkened eye well helps protect the eye from intense light.
A nictitating membrane helps to protect the eye and retains moisture.

03 Moisture Trap -

Captures moisture from breath, funnels this down to the water bladders (worn around back of thighs).

04 Signal Silk -

Used to convey messages to other scouts.

05 Bladders -

Water bladders are slung around the back of the lower robes. Filled before missions these can be refilled at supply stations or are topped up from the moisture trap.

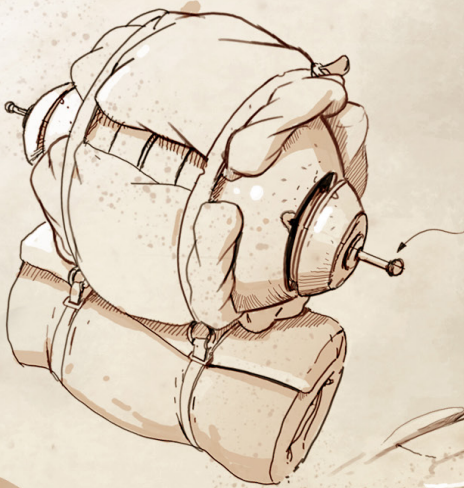
06 Head -

Numerous other features on the head contribute to desert adaptation:
Ear - Enlarged ears allow heat to escape.
Mouth - The small mouth helps retain moisture.
Nose - Nostrils that can open and shut when breathing prevents moisture from escaping.



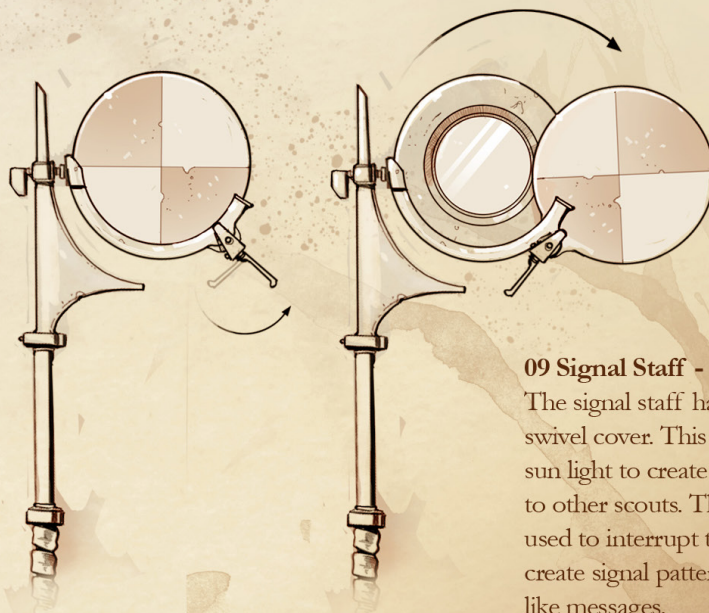
07 Supplies -

Carried on the back, this parcel contains: a ceramic vessel that carries food and doubles as a stove, 4 additional signal silks (in 4 different colours) and bedding.



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The large headdress unfolds into a small single person shelter. This shelter is used to avoid the hottest periods of the day, to bed down for the night, or to provide protection from desert storms. The staff is separated in two, with the bottom portion extending to become the main support for this shelter.



09 Signal Staff - Reflector Mirror

The signal staff has a mirror with a hinged swivel cover. This mirror is used to reflect sun light to create communication signals to other scouts. The swivel cover can be used to interrupt the reflected light to create signal patterns or morse code-like messages.



The Artist



Rasmus Berggreen

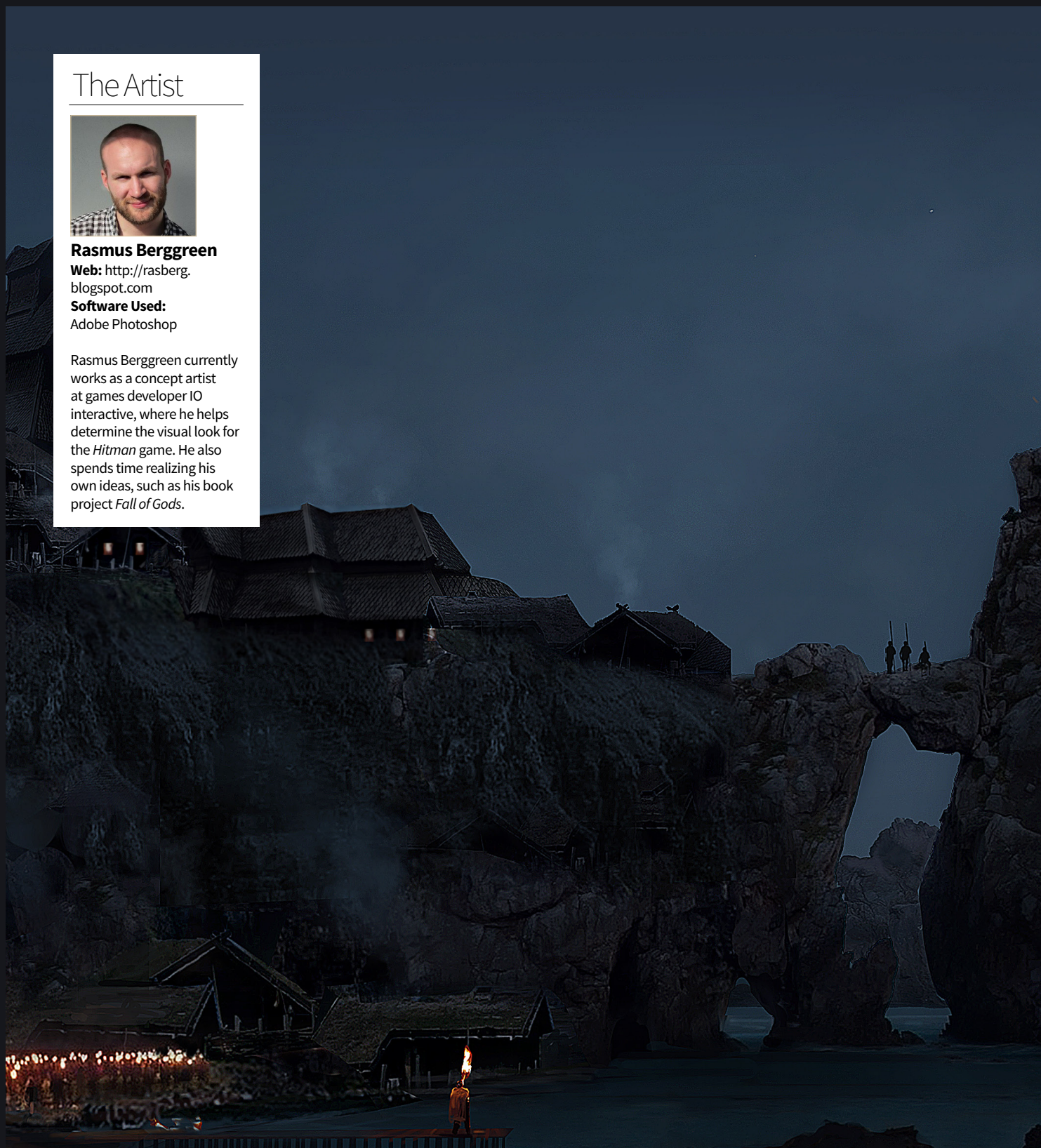
Web: <http://rasberg.blogspot.com>

Software Used:
Adobe Photoshop

Rasmus Berggreen currently works as a concept artist at games developer IO interactive, where he helps determine the visual look for the *Hitman* game. He also spends time realizing his own ideas, such as his book project *Fall of Gods*.

Matte painting mythology

Games developer, Rasmus Berggreen, divulges some of his top methods and techniques when creating his fantastic image, *The Last Goodbye* ▶





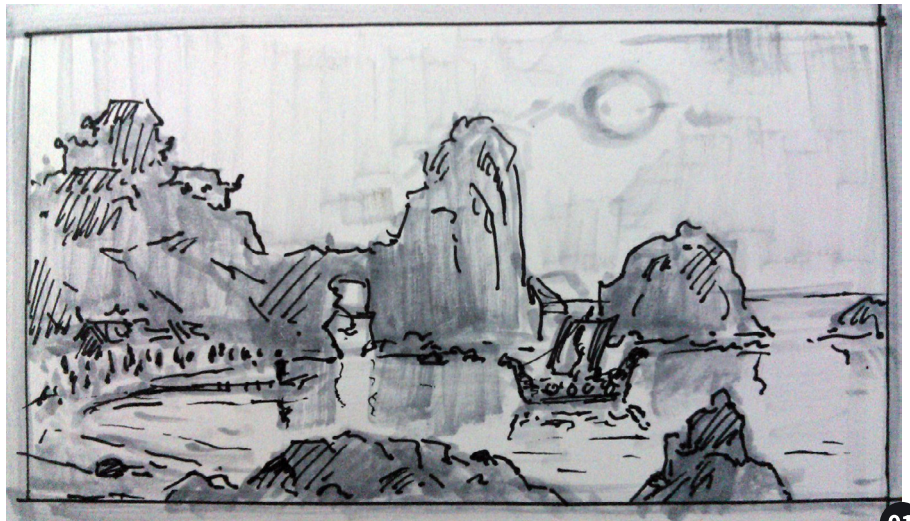
Rasmus Berggreen shares his insights into creating wonderful 2D images...

This illustration is made for my personal pet project, Fall of Gods. It is based on a Norse mythology-inspired story about the warrior Váli, who sets out to bring back his murdered family from the underworld. I have always dreamed of doing my own take on this subject, as I haven't seen a project yet that has fully captured the essence of the mythology. This piece in particular depicts the moment where the main character Váli says goodbye to his brother and, in true Viking tradition, is put to rest at sea in a burning ship.

The book itself will be full of illustrations, with a distinctive semi-realistic feel to the images. To me, it's important to build up a dense atmosphere and a great sense of scale, so to achieve this I used specific matte painting techniques.

Matte painting is used in the film industry to convey realistic settings on the big screen. To achieve this realism, it is often necessary to combine a lot of different photos; the challenge being to produce a coherent look. As I am aiming for an illustrated feel for my book, I think of my pieces as concept art that just applies matte painting techniques.

"I used a Chalk brush in Photoshop because it is quite rough so I didn't get caught up making too many details."



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I will demonstrate these techniques in the following article. I will go through several process steps including a rough sketch, color blocking, building-up the painting and applying the final finishing touches. I'll then finish with some highlights and tips.

01 Idea sketch: I knew from the start that I wanted to capture the moment where the main character Váli has to put his brother to rest. It is an emotional moment, as the main character grieves his loss.

So how do you capture that specific moment best? My solution was to create a very calm image, broken up by the dynamic and fierce flames from the ship. That shows the character's inner struggle.

Here is my initial sketch made with some almost dried out markers, and a pen. (Yes, they should be refilled).

02 Blocking colors: This is one of the most crucial steps, as this is the point at which the direction of the painting is determined.

In this project, I considered the composition and whether the image read well. I used a Chalk brush in Photoshop because it is quite rough so I didn't get caught up making too many details (which can easily happen when you get excited). To me, the most important elements of a great design are shapes and lighting, and that the whole color palette seems coherent.

03 The beginning: Once I'd considered the direction I was going, I started all over again. I started by defining my horizon, sky and water, and of course the image size. I knew this was for print, so I made sure the image was at least 4000px and in 300dpi.

The foundation was much lighter than my original painting was. I did that to make it easier



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to control the values later on in the process, as I had a broader range to navigate. I returned to this at a later time when I tweaked the image with the curves filter.

04 Blocking in shapes: I then blocked in the shapes of the cliffs. I used the Lasso tool, and simply followed my color sketch, but also made sure that the shapes seemed realistic as well as interesting.

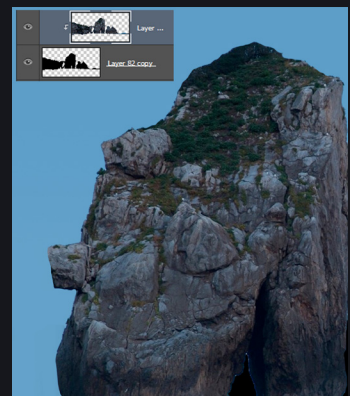
It is a good idea to have a strong silhouette as you can apply texture on top in a very easy way, and still make sure your shape has clear edges (see pro tip section). I knew from my concept that the image would read well, so I tried to follow that quite closely. ►

⚡ PRO TIP

Applying texture

This is a method in Photoshop that I have used a lot, as it gives me control of my edges. When you hold down Alt between two layers, a small arrow will appear. This means the layer is only applied to the pixels below.

As shown in my tutorial, you can make sharp silhouettes with the Lasso tool, and then make a texture layer on top and not have to worry about whether you are inside the border. This way you'll keep your sharp edges which help define the shapes.





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“I used both a color balance to hit the right color and a hue/saturation. The cool thing is that you can always tweak these later and paint into the mask if you are not satisfied with the result, so you haven’t destroyed any pixel information this way”

05 Applying texture: At this point, I began to apply texture for the environment.

I used good references of rocks and cliffs, and shaped it to my silhouette. The Transform tool using Warp was quite effective here, and I often used the Stamp tool to vary the patterns and then paint on top afterwards.

I made sure the texture blended well, so there were not too many weird artifacts. I also began to shape the architecture. I wanted this to feel like a town built around the natural environment, following the terrain. I wanted it to feel like a Viking setting, but without being something I have seen before.

06 Tone of painting: After the base of the painting was roughly done, I had a lot of image information to use for tweaking the values.

First, I used curves to get the overall value right. Then, I used both a color balance to hit the right color and a hue/saturation. The cool thing is that you can always tweak these later and paint into the mask if you are not satisfied with the result, so

you haven’t destroyed any pixel information this way. It pays off to start out in a structured manner so you can tweak the whole image.

07 Adding atmosphere: I used some time here to reconsider my image, and made sure everything fitted together and blended nicely before moving on. I made certain areas darker so the highlights stood out, and added details such as small clouds around the moon, highlights on the rock formations and more coherent texture around the village. For the clouds, I used a custom brush. Later in the process I used the same brush for adding smoke.

08 Adding characters: I then moved forward with the narrative element of the



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painting. I wanted a lot of people with torches on the beach, and the lonely brother standing on the pier. I always have characters on separate layers, so I can go back and add or erase if needed.

I found the right color for the yellow and orange/red to achieve the perfect dynamic. I also began to add smoke from the village chimneys, and light in the windows. At that point, the village was coming to life, and there was a good balance between the colors.

09 Ship on fire: This step took some time. I found multiple ships that I stitched together in Photoshop then added a lot of fire around it. I still aimed for realism, so I used some time to paint on top and blend the different elements. I wanted the fire to feel dramatic as if



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it was devouring the ship. It added to the drama I think, and underlined the story of the lost brother. To me, the contrast between the beautiful silent evening and the violently burning ship perfectly reflected the main characters emotional state.

10 Final tweaks: This was just a last final touch. When using this kind of approach, sometimes the image can get a little blurry. To make it sharper, I used the Smart Sharpen function, which can be found under Filters > Sharpen > Smart Sharpen. You can tweak the parameters, so you get the right amount of sharpness and detail. Be careful to use the radius above 1.0 though, as it can make some heavy halos.

And so the image is done. ●

⚡ PRO TIP

I often use the compositional tool called Rule of Thirds to arrange my image. This tool is helpful as it divides the canvas in thirds, and thereby gives some guidelines to points of interest. As the eye tends to rest at these specific points, you can use this to your advantage. I hardly ever follow it strictly though as a great composition also comes down to rhythm within the frame. In this image, I found the moon acted as a counterweight too much, so that is why I have moved the ship more to the left in the frame.

The Artist



Rasmus Berggreen

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2dartist

next month

- The art of Heavy Rain illustrator, Benoit Godde
- YongSub Noh paints a fantasy creature
- Christopher Peters shares his guide to painting toxic characters
- Clonerh Kimura reveals his top tips and tricks
- Donovan Valdes demonstrates how to paint an epic battle scene
- Discover new character art skills in Photoshop with Paolo Puggioni
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The Artist



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Software Used:

Adobe Photoshop

DIGITAL ART MASTER:

Red Steam

by Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

Ignacio Bazan Lazcano is an expert of epic scenes. This issue, he shares the techniques he uses when conceptualizing historic scenes. Read on to discover how he created the image, Red Steam, for his graphic novel. ▶



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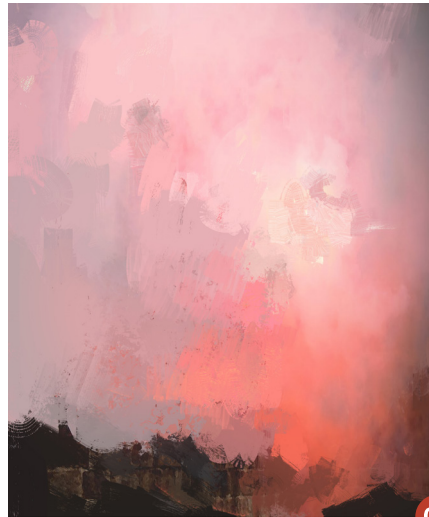
Introduction

For over two years I've been working in my free time on a graphic novel. It takes a lot of time and dedication, and sadly I see results slower than I would like to because I only have a few hours a week to do it.

I've always loved drawing historic scenes; characters of the past, ancient weapons and, most of all, rewriting and designing history. My father is a recognized historical researcher and he has managed to convey his love for history to me, which I think has had an impact on my drawings. Of course, he never talked to me about robots or steam war-engines; they just came out of my crazy mind and artistic imagination!

I've been amassing ideas for a long time now in the form of drafts and unfinished drawings, most of which are vehicle designs, uniforms and cities. I use these images as an aesthetic guide that helps me make decisions when starting a new drawing.

While I was enjoying one of my few days off, I decided to create a new character for my personal collection and specifically for my book.



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As is often the case, I didn't know in advance what I was going to draw. It is not easy to start from scratch, and often when ideas don't seem to be flowing I turn to pictures and films.

Ideas can come from anywhere and anything can act as a source of inspiration. I am a good observer and I do it all the time, generally getting inspiration from colors. My ideas usually emerge



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from something abstract, such as the way light appears in a certain situation. I often think that a beautiful illustration can emerge from colorful shapes. When working on the image and searching for inspiration, I came across a couple of photographs containing orange flares that pointed me in the direction I was aiming for.

Creating a base

I started with a color palette and built the foundation of what would become my picture. Just having the color base was enough to prompt me to start thinking about what would be in the scene (**Fig.01**). My idea was to create some sort of cover for a movie or book, something that really struck a chord with everyone who looked at it. I knew that my drawing would have a central character and something in the background.

When I started to assemble the foundation of the painting, I used a photograph that I liked and moved the colors around. I didn't use any filtering or image distortion, but just created a new canvas and painted it with a mixture of the colors I intended to use.

Composition and line

The next step was to plan the elements I was going to paint over this color base. Would it be a character in an action pose, a portrait, a landscape? In order to encourage ideas and develop the content, I started painting abstract forms until I found something that worked.

For many people, this way of working seems very strange and unnatural, but for me to start a painting this way allows me to explore more opportunities and ideas.

The next step was to begin defining these forms, and the first thing I thought about was a soldier with his war robot. Obviously, this phase is not purely random, and each stage of development



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“Each element of the painting (whether it be the trees, people or buildings) should integrate colors from the environment”

helps me get closer to the idea I’m searching for until I get a definite form. At this point, I only had two layers; the first being the background colors, the second containing the figures (Fig.02). I then added a new layer and started to add some color and line work to help develop the scene (Fig.03).

Color

To many people this stage proves very difficult, but luckily for me it is the part of the process that I enjoy the most. At this point, I decided to create the color palette, which requires you to start considering the harmony and balance of the image early in the process. Badly selected colors can change the painting’s composition and make it awkward to look at, but obviously it is up to your own personal tastes as to which colors you choose (Fig.04). The options are almost unlimited, but for the sake of simplicity I worked with a limited color palette made up of blue, red, orange and green (Fig.05 – 07).

Sometimes you will look at a painting and realize that an artist has used grays and greens on an item that is clearly red. It can make you scratch your head and think, how did he make those colors work? If you can add these extra colors to your palette, your colors will become richer. The key is to find the colors that compliment your



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base color. If done carefully, this mixture of color can even help to convey an object’s material composition (Fig.08).

Some artists who are comic fans can be afraid of painting over their line drawings as they don’t want to lose the overall shapes. In most cases these lines can be painted over with either light

or shade, which also helps achieve a sense of realism (Fig.09).

Each element of the painting (whether it be the trees, people or buildings) should integrate colors from the environment. I usually add the background color into the base that I painted at the beginning. If the robot is red and the



background is gray/violet, I will use gray in the red regions to make it look like the character is actually standing in that environment. In general, I add the background color to faces and planes that look like they could be reflecting color from that direction. This also helps to demonstrate depth and distance in the image. Quite often, you will see a nicely painted background and character that look like they are not part of the same scene or environment. The key is to mix the colors like this to make everything look as if it is part of the same image (Fig.10).

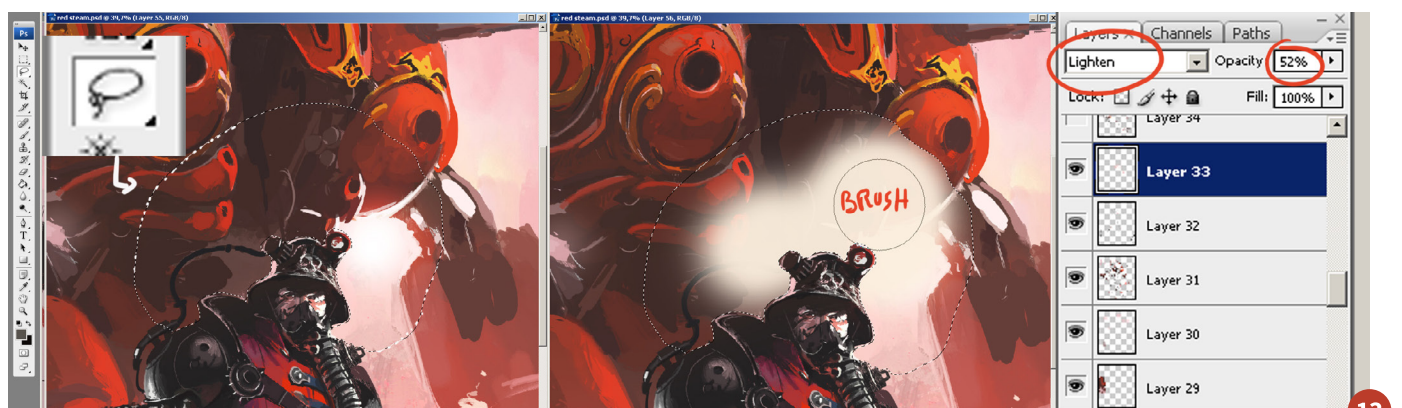
Depth

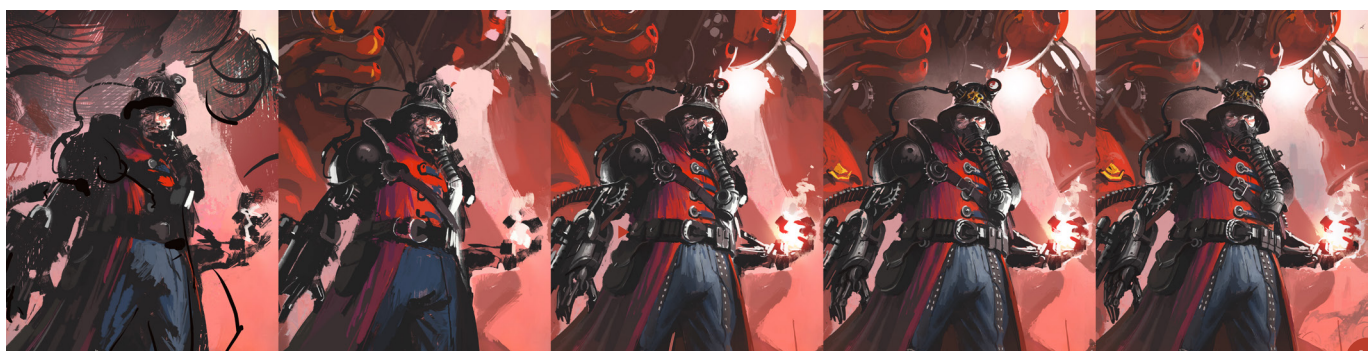
To create depth, I painted in a fence and repeated it throughout the image from the foreground to the background. Obviously, I ensured that the size of the fence varied according to the perspective. Whenever you duplicate an object several times in different sizes, you tell the observer that there is distance between them. Repeating elements of the same design provides rhythm and is also useful within the composition, helping to make it look less flat (Fig.11).



Contrast is another way of creating distance, with lighter colors receding behind darker tones. I always use black and whites very carefully and you'll not find a pure black or white color in any of my paintings (Fig.12).

To separate the robot from the character, I used a fog effect, which created some distance between them. An easy way of doing this is to use a mask and then paint white into the selected area. You can then set that layer to Screen or Lighten mode and adjust the opacity (Fig.13).





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15

Final detail

Once we have the final color palette, and the shape and design of the characters, we can turn to the final detailing stage. To detail this picture, I took into account the order of importance in order to draw the viewer's attention to the character more than the robot. The character's chest, side and face are the most detailed areas, followed by the robot's left side, other parts of the chest and arm (Fig.14 – 15).

Special effects (particles, ash, smoke or sparks) will affect color, reflection and shadows. The way that I deal with this is to first define all shapes and add these effects at the end.

One final tip that I would like to offer is in regards to having your image printed. I mentioned at the beginning that I created this as a book cover or poster-like illustration, so I had to consider that it may be printed. When an image is converted from RGB to CMYK, blacks and whites often end up burned and distorted, which can ruin an image. In the case of my image, I lightened it to make sure this wasn't going to be as much of a problem when the image is printed. A good way to test this is to simply print out your picture on a printer to see how it comes out (Fig.16).

Conclusion

It is good to have your own personal project with which you can free yourself from your daily work. I spend all day working for others, fulfilling other's dreams and while I do enjoy doing it, there is nothing more rewarding than having a small amount of time to work on your own art, and to take advantage of your own ideas. I want to thank

3DTotal for giving me the opportunity to show my work, and for providing an outlet for artists to

share their work with the community. I hope you like it! ●



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DIGITAL ART MASTERS

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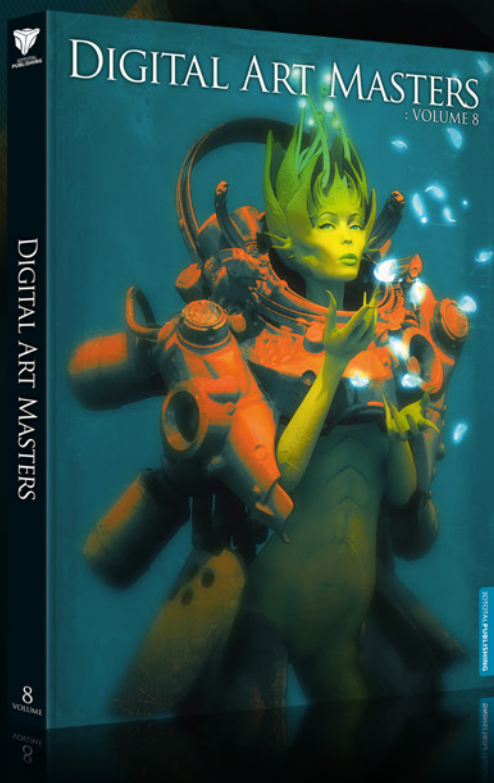
DIGITAL ART MASTERS

:VOLUME 8

"An integral part of my own drive for self improvement has always been admiring and scrutinizing the work of others. Getting to see brilliant works of art broken down and explained step-by-step is always a pleasure, and a captivating glimpse into the minds and processes of the artists behind them."

Charlie Bowater

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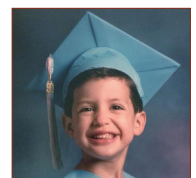
Last Dan Standing

Digital concept artist, Dan Luvisi has become known in the film, video game and comic book industry for his detailed and original imagery, and has now made a big impression all over the internet with his amazing versions of pop culture icons! We chat with the Last Man Standing creator about inking deals with Hollywood studios and having action figures made of his characters ▶





The Artist



Dan Luvisi

Web: www.danluvisiart.com

Interviewed by:
Henry Winchester

Diligent Dan has worked for some of the biggest names in entertainment while pursuing his own personal projects, such as Last Man Standing and Popped Culture.

Dan Luvisi's story is the stuff artists' dreams are made of. Inspired at the age of three by a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comic, he's been drawing ever since. While still in high school, he was offered a job with a German games company and he's worked for entertainment industry giants such as Hasbro, Fox, Universal and Microsoft.

Dan's spare time is spent on more personal projects. His DeviantArt page is stuffed full of his inspirations and has attracted a huge following. His graphic novel *Last Man Standing: Killbook of a Bounty Hunter* was published in 2010 by Heavy Metal Magazine, and is due to be reissued later this year. It's also been optioned by Paramount Pictures to be turned into a movie, and since moving to LA in 2008, Dan's been intimately involved in the movie industry, even designing costumes for big budget sci-fi movies.

Despite his success as a burgeoning Hollywood player, Dan certainly hasn't let fame go to his head – which is something of a rarity in the world of egomaniacal creative success. His head may be chock-full of amazing plots and detailed characters, but his feet are planted

“I’ve always been independent, and not because of any egotistical reasons or being unable to cooperate, I would just rather create my own world”

firmly on the floor. He still indulges in personal art – his “Popped Culture” series is hilarious and disturbing in equal measure, and he considers his family and upbringing to be a bigger influence than contemporary artists.

We sat down with this wise-beyond-his-years artist to discuss making it in the movies, the differences between working commercially and working for yourself, and his upcoming talk at Portugal's Trojan Horse was a Unicorn CG art festival.

2DArtist: First up — *Last Man Standing* has been optioned by Paramount again. Congratulations! How are you feeling about it?

Dan Luvisi: Thank you. Honestly, nervous and excited. There is a constant bubble of anxiety in my stomach whenever the topic is brought up. Will it get made? Will it be good? Will the

world accept Gabriel and his crazy ways? Will the movie even be close to what I see? They're selfish reasons that only a creator would understand.

I've been told to slow down and appreciate the moment, which I wish I could do, but the creator in me wants it to be right. I want it to feel new and allow audiences to be transported into a new world, the way movies did to me when I was a child. But you know, as Hollywood is, you have to truck through a lot of politics and suits to get to that point — and I won't lie, I'm scared about that. It's a lot of pressure.

2DA: How did *Last Man Standing* come about?

DL: About four years ago, in 2008, I was working for Microsoft on a Xbox Live Media project. I really wasn't feeling it, and wasn't happy with where I was as an artist. I've always been independent, and not because of any egotistical reasons or being unable to cooperate, I would just rather create my own world than design someone else's.

It was put into me by my Dad, who always suggested I be my own boss. So I took the initiative and began designing characters for fun. Once I began uploading them, they took ▶



LUVISI

● Spawn's Venom received the Luvisi treatment. It's terrifying and beautiful by equal measure



● A fantastic, dramatic image of Star Wars' iconic bounty hunter Boba Fett after a battle



off and created a world for themselves which soon became known as *Last Man Standing*. But it wasn't until I painted Gabriel, the protagonist, where it all truly came together and made me realize what this could eventually be.

2DA: What will be the next stage with the Paramount deal?

DL: Well, currently Paramount has optioned *LMS*. And the way that works is that with each project, a studio is given a choice of either Optioning or Purchasing a project. If you Option it, the studio is usually given 12-18 months to figure out how they will make that specific film. If they can't, within that time-frame, they are given a choice to do another Option or Purchase, or, to altogether let it go.

Paramount has Optioned *LMS* twice, and are currently sending it out to directors to get their views on it before we make the next step. I can say that, while anxious to see this thing move, I am very happy and supportive of every decision Paramount has made so far. I'm just pining to see Gabriel come to life already!

2DA: How did you get into the field of illustration?

DL: My father was a fantastic painter in his prime and my mother was a wonderful interior designer. I suppose when you mix both of their DNA, you get me — and art just seemed to be the only thing that truly made me feel good about myself. Ever since I was a child, I have been obsessed with illustrating, trying to teach myself every new trick I could learn.

As I made my way through high school, I came to realize that I would have to eventually push myself to the next level and go into digital illustration — something that my art teachers were not too fond of. I then realized that this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, and continued to push to that goal. Thankfully, people were crazy enough to hire me out of High School and ever since I have been working professionally.

2DA: Which artists do you most admire and respect, and who do you think has been your biggest influence?

DL: It's hard to say. You look at a lot of artists, and the big ones tend to act like rockstars, while the lesser known ones grow jaded and cynical. I don't find myself seeking inspiration from artists as much as I do family or friends.

While many, many of my artistic friends inspire me to no end, not only with their lives, but with their careers, I seek inspiration from people like my father, my mother and my grandfather. People that have been through the thick of things, lost money, lost friends, lost family, but continued to keep their head up in a modest sense: those that have learned from their bad mistakes, mishaps, and judgment. I admire and respect those that are willing to be human, make mistakes, but will do anything in their power to protect their family or friends. That's what inspiration is to me.

2DA: Do you have an entirely digital workflow, or do you use traditional methods as well?

DL: It may be against popular opinion I'm sure, but I have actually used traditional mediums ever since I was four. I have binders filled with penciled-out characters (in *LMS* style detail) which will probably never see the light of day. I used to draw for hours during my classes, and then when I went on to Junior College. Thing is, it's not required now. While the likes of John Howe or Alvin Lee, or even Crash McCreary can get away with it, studios demand faster results — and with color. ▶

● No Country for Old Men meets the muppets. Dan does seem to have a vendetta against Gonzo, for some reason



the Muppets
AFTER
**NO COUNTRY
FOR OLD MEN**

LUVISI

- One of Dan's most famous pictures is this humanized, dirty spin on *Toy Story*'s plastic protagonist Buzz Lightyear



LUVISI

● Dan's Popped Culture series puts a twist on popular characters. Here's *Sesame Street* stars Bert and Ernie with a distinctly Scorsese aesthetic



So for my style, no, no traditional mediums are used. My process is very ordinary, if anything, it's similar to traditional painting. I sketch it, do my lines, lay down my base colors and begin rendering part by part. No tricks, no filters, no photos, just a lot of OCD going into things and driving myself crazy until eventually I enjoy the painting enough to show it to the world.

2DA: Your Popped Culture series is brilliantly deranged. What inspired it?

DL: Thank you. What inspired it? Sadly, heartbreak. I had recently gotten out of a pretty bad relationship and jumped right into one with an amazing, amazing girl. I wasn't so much ready for what was to come, and out of that needed

to vent. It sounds cheesy as all hell, but you asked; I needed to express that pain through my art. Popped Culture came from that, and while they are very, very dark images, I wanted to add a sense of humor and if anything, irony to the pieces. I began to look past the images, and what really clicked with the audience. ►

the Muppets
AFTER
Drive



● Kermit the Frog takes on Ryan Gosling's role in *Drive*. There's a film we'd pay to see

“I truly don’t know what my style is. I think I do at times, maybe colorful, detailed, dumb and weird?”

Who was Buzz Lightyear in his prime? What if Wreck-It Ralph was a Street Fighter and not an arcade game? What if Mike from *Monster’s Inc.*, allowed his jealousy of Sully to get to him? What were those consequences? Once I had those motives and that way of establishing the world, that’s where it became easy.

2DA: What’s the biggest challenge you’ve faced as an artist?

DL: Doubt and fear. A lot of people seem to think that this type of job is easy, and that everything is handed on a silver platter. It’s not. *LMS* took a long, long time to come to fruition, and a lot of work and money that a lot of people don’t seem to grasp. During the production of the book, I was flat out poor, asking for favors, and any money that I did make, was going straight to rent. I had family, even friends doubting it at times, wondering if it was a good idea. Some people suggested just working for a studio, that a book would never go anywhere.

2DA: Since the Paramount deal, have you had more offers of work?

DL: Yes. Currently, *Redemption*, my next book, is being looked at by an Academy Award-winning director, and he is considering directing the film version. I have been so incredibly lucky with every opportunity that has been presented to me. I’ve worked on *LMS* since 2008, every day thinking about each character, the world that it is, and what inhabits it. And to be able to see models, life-size statues and toys of those characters seriously puts me on cloud nine. It’s a dream come true, and one of the main reasons why I encourage other artists to create and build their own world. The power of that, and being able to have others design what you originally sought... that can’t be topped.

2DA: You’re attending Trojan Horse was a Unicorn festival as a speaker — would you be able to give us an idea of what you’ll be talking about?

DL: When I’m there I will be focusing on how I created *LMS: Killbook of a Bounty Hunter*, the process of it, and where it took me to now; eventually leading into how you can create your own IP, what you should be looking out for, and why it’s a good, but daunting idea. The other side will be focusing on Popped Culture, where I will return to the series with a brand new piece that ►

● Touches of bright color and a halo give *LMS*’s Gabriel a touch of humility and fun



⚡ PRO TIP

Approaching a new piece of art

I always find that things I enjoy, like music, and yes, long walks on the beach, inspire me and bring out those ideas from the depths of my dark brain! Somehow, these thoughts then turn into paintings. It’s rare, but sometimes I will see the image formed in my head, and from there I can render it.

I will also check through my inspiration folder, shuffling images as fast as I can to maybe catch a quick glimpse of inspiration.

no one has seen yet, and how I worked on it / created it.

2DA: Have you ever given a talk or attended a festival like this before?

DL: The only live workshop I've ever done was for The Gnomon Workshop earlier this year. And while I was incredibly nervous with stage-fright, I ended up having a fantastic time and learned a lot about myself. I am very excited to be brought into this event, especially in Portugal, and do it again. I just hope people enjoy my cats... that's how I open the shows.

2DA: Are there any other speakers/events at THU you're keen to see?

DL: Aaron McBride, Geoffrey Ernault, Alex Oliver, Serge Birault, and Andrew Schmidt.

2DA: You've worked in both games and movies — do you find there's a big difference between the two?

DL: No, both have politics, both have suits, and both have stressful deadlines with art directors that don't seem to ever know what they want. I respect both industries head over heels, but I respect the artists inside them ten times over. Art shouldn't be about stress, deadlines, or forced opinions, but unfortunately that's the way the business falls. I feel a lot of inspiration (unless directed by a solid and good team) is dragged from the artists and they begin to lose their connect with the property. I could be terribly wrong, but that's how I was and why I couldn't work under a studio roof. As stressful as I made *LMS* seem, I don't ever face those challenges.

2DA: Your work has quite a distinctive look — is this easy to maintain when you're working on commercial projects, or do you have to reign it in?

DL: It's hard to answer that as I truly don't know what my style is. I think I do at times, maybe colorful, detailed, dumb and weird? I have control over it, because I'm so used to it, but I wonder if that at times can be considered a safety net. I try to paint new things and test myself, especially with the Popped Culture series, but who knows. I don't think I'll ever know what type of artist I am until I'm lying in my deathbed, as grim as that may sound.

I hate to admit it, but at times art has sometimes turned into a chore, rather than a passion. I hope to one day break free of that, and feel inspired to paint, instead of forced to so I can pay rent and what not.

● *Super Mario Bros' Yoshi via Jurassic Park. We'll never look at the game in the same way again*



I miss being a kid...

2DA: Could you tell us something about yourself not many people would know?

DL: I'm scared shitless of failing.

I take art very seriously. It's what I dream, think and stress over every single day. At times I wonder if it's an obsession and the only thing I will be ever able to give 110%. The good thing is, it doesn't argue or cry. It waits until I'm ready to go back into it and try again, and has been there since I started.

That said, it's taken a lot out of me, both mentally and physically in terms of friends and family.

At times, I have put art and my projects before others, and have had to sacrifice amazing relationships for that. I've forgotten about family, lost contact, and stopped caring — when I didn't even feel in control.

So I guess what I'm trying to say is, allow it to be fun. Take your time with it. Let it come to you, don't force, and remember, it's just a hobby. But maybe I should take my own advice... ●

● Homer Simpson as you've never seen him before in Dan's Popped Culture series



LUVISI

**THE
SIMPSONS**

GRAND THEFT OTTO